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SELECTED WORKS OF SIRDAR KAPUR SINGH

Some Insights into Sikhism

Madanjit Kaur & Piar Singh



GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR

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INTO
SIKHISM***

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Editors

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SOME INSIGHTS INTO SIKHISM

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CONTENTS

--Foreword	
--Editors' Note	
--Key to Transliteration	
1. Sikhs and Sikhism	1-21
2. Impact of Sikhism on Modern India	22-32
3. Sikhism and Islam	33-36
4. Sikhism and The World Society	37-40
5. War and Sikhism	41-43
6. A Blue Print for Preaching Sikhism	44-51
7. Sikhs and Communism	52-62
8. Sex and Sikhism	63-76
9. The Two Questions	77-80
10. Sikh Symbols and Conformism	81-86
11. Sikh Baptismal Discipline	87-105
12. The Tribune and the Sikh Impulse	106-111
13. Sikh Identity	112-114
14. On Four Fundamental Issues	115-128
--Appendix I	129-130
--Bibliography	131-133
--Index	134-139

FOREWORD

The University has the pleasure to place in the hands of the readers **SOME INSIGHTS INTO SIKHISM** a compilation of the articles written by late Sirdar Kapur Singh former I.C.S. This volume is in pursuance of a project taken in hand some five years ago to collect and publish his stray writings bearing on Sikh thought, annals and culture. Sirdar Kapur Singh's writings often showed great depth of thought and originality of approach. Sweep of his knowledge of major religions of the world is very often very fast.

I hope, this collection of fourteen refreshing articles will prove to be a valuable addition to the four works already published, namely *Parasaraprasna* or Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh, *Guru Nanak's Life and Thought*, *Sikhism For Modern Man* and *Guru Arjun and His Sukhmani*. With the publication of these books our quest for Sirdar Kapur Singh's writings in English on religio-cultural cum historical aspects of Sikh fraternity has added significantly to our existing knowledge on Sikhism.

University's thanks are due to Sirdar Kapur Singh's distinguished son, Dr. Inderjit Singh, Principal Economist I.B.R.D. Washington D.C. U.S.A. for extending his valued cooperation in furnishing the University with the necessary type-scripts.



Guru Nanak Dev University
Amritsar.

(G.S. Randhawa)
Vice-Chancellor

18 Sep., 1995.

EDITORS' NOTE

SOME INSIGHTS INTO SIKHISM is the collection of Sirdar Kapur Singh's stray articles that is being placed into the hands of readers in the series: 'Selected Works of Sirdar Kapur Singh'. This volume provides comprehensive introduction and guide to the study of the Sikh Religion and explains, in detail, some of the key ideas and significant features related to the Sikh world-view in its historical perspective. The book presents a very broad range of readings to the students of comparative religion to realize how faith itself imparts the nature of being religious. It contains fourteen articles pertaining to different aspects of the Sikh religion and Sikh history. They are significant in bringing to the reader's mind the universal nature of Sikh values and their concern for a healthy corporate life aiming at the redemption of mankind at both levels, the spiritual and temporal. Some of the articles are intended to remove doctrinal misunderstandings and others to clear the fog on the practical aspect of the Sikh way of life. In this series **Sex and Sikhism** is a very illuminating article. It discusses this delicate subject in the light of Sikh tenets vis-a-vis norms and practices of other especially Western societies. **Sikh Baptismal Discipline** is a revealing introspection of the innovations that certain over-zealous and orthodox orders tend to promulgate. The last article **On Four Fundamental Issues** provokes readers to seek further query into the nature of the Sikh Divine.

All these articles show deep insight to impart on Sikhism. Each essay includes plenty of examples and illustrations from the contemporary World and provides a stimulating analysis of various questions and major issues relating to Sikhism.

This work includes fresh material relating to dominant features of Sikhism. Drawing on the most upto-date scholarship, Sirdar Kapur Singh offers a brilliantly clear explanation of his ideas set firmly in the historical context. This academic exercise will prove to be an invaluable, clear and

unprejudiced guide to the whole discipline of Sikh Studies. The contents of this book contains immensely instructive and helpful grounding for the students of Sikh religion. It is hoped that this volume will prove to be an indispensable introduction for historians, theologians and social scientists seeking to understand the ideas of the Sikh Revolution in the context of History of World Religions.

As before we have in our humble way taken care to present these articles in a homogenous format; checked up and completed references quoted by the author. Likewise, to make the quotes and references more intelligible, we have equipped them, where necessary, with proper diacritical marks and have also supplemented the quotes with their original texts as well as their transliteration in English. The key to transliteration is also given as also the Bibliography culled from the author's articles.

Our thanks are due to Dr. Shukdev Sharma, Prof & Head, Deppt. of Sanskrit who has lent-his help in checking up Sanskrit quotes.

The help rendered by S. Jagjit Singh Walia, Director, Press and Publications and his staff, particularly Shri S.S. Narula, Senior Proof Reader is praiseworthy and deserves our utmost thanks.

Madanjit Kaur and Piar Singh

KEY TO TRANSLITERATION

Gurmukhi/ Devanagari Sound 1	Gra- pHEME 2	Gurmukhi/ Devanagari Sound 3	Gra- pHEME 4	Arabic Sound (a few) 5	Gra- pHEME 6
ਅ ਆ	a	ਘ ਥ	gh	ث	s / th
ਆ ਆ	ā	ਙ ਙ	n	س/ص	s
ਇ ਈ	i	ਚ ਚ	ć / ch	ش	ś / sh
ਈ ਈ	ī	ਛ ਛ	ċh/chh	ح	ḥ
ਉ ਊ	u	ਜ ਙ	j	ق	q / k
ਊ ਊ	ū	ਝ ਝ	jh	خ	<u>kh</u> / kh
ਏ ਏ	e	ਵ ਙ	ñ	ع	, with the
ਐ ਐ	ai	ਟ ਟ	ṭ		vowel
ਓ ਓ	o	ਠ ਠ	ṭh	غ	<u>gh</u>
ਔ ਔ	au	ਡ ਙ	ḍ	ذ/ذ	z
ਅੰ ਅੰ	m̐ / ṁ	ਢ ਢ	ḍh	ض/ظ	<u>z</u> / <u>dh</u>
ਰਿ ਰਿ	ri / ṛ	ਣ ਣ	ṇ	و	w/v
ਸ ਸ	s	ਤ ਤ	t	ف	f
ਹ ਹ	h	ਥ ਥ	th		
ਕ ਕ	k	ਦ ਦ	d		
ਖ ਖ	kh	ਧ ਧ	dh		
ਗ ਗ	g	ਨ ਨ	n		

1	2	3	4	5	6
ਪ	ਪ	p	ਲ	ਲ	l
ਫ	ਫ	ph	ਵ	ਵ	v / w
ਬ	ਬ	b	ਡ	ਡ	r / d
ਭ	ਭ	bh	ਸ਼	ਸ਼	ś / sh
ਮ	ਮ	m	ਜ	ਜ	z
ਯ	ਯ	y	ਗ	ਗ	jñ
ਰ	ਰ	r	ਕ	ਕ	s
			ਖ	ਖ	ks

SIKHS AND SIKHISM

(Below is reproduced a speech delivered by Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh, M.A. (Cantab.) ex-M.P., ex-I.C.S., National Professor of Sikhism, in the Thompson School Auditorium at Vancouver, B.C., on the evening of 7th October, 1974 under the auspices of All Canada Sikh Fedcration)

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since this audience largely consists of Punjabis and men of Indian origin residing in Canada, I would have preferred to speak here either in Punjabi language or in a simple, homely style, so as to communicate to you what my basic ideas are on the subject of *Sikhs and Sikhism*. But as it is, I have been charged with the task of giving a talk on this subject which has some kind of academic level so that the All Canada Sikh Federation can later on use it as a semi-permanent record for the purpose of communicating it to the non-Sikh Canadians and other English-speaking peoples. Therefore, I humbly request you to bear with me and to be indulgent if sometimes I seem to be speaking somewhat tiresomely.

Sikhs are a religious community and a political nation simultaneously and, thus, they are a unique society of the world. The Sikhs are distinguishable from the Hindu society, which is essentially a territorial culture-group. In the ancient Sanskrit texts, *Vishnu-purana* in particular, it is laid down that Hindus are those born in the geographical area called Bharat, and this geographical area is delineated as extending from the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari, Cape Comorin of Europeans, and from the river Indus to the seas that girdle the soil of India, that is, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Sea. Essentially, Hinduism is non-exportable and locatable and its modern conversion and oecumenical activities are unsanctioned innovations. Islamic society is grounded in totalitarianism of religious formulae and social laws, enforceable by political sovereignty and overlordship over non-muslim societies.

Christendom and Christianity formed a political society of medieval

ages and are an oecumenical, universal religion of Gentiles, without being a political society in the modern world.

The Jewish society is basically and fiercely ethnical while Buddhism is fundamentally non-social and non-political.

Sikhism is a social religion, non-ethnical, oecumenical, grounded in a political society, directed and committed to propagation and establishing of a plural world-society, tolerant, open, progressive and free in character.

Thus, Sikhism and the Sikhs form a unique religion and a unique society, which and who can be clearly distinguished from the other religious and political societies of the world.

Arnold Toynbee, the world-famous historian and philosopher of History, in his *magnum opus*, *History*, refers to Sikhism as the forerunner of the true *elan* of the Communist Party of Lenin. Arnold Toynbee adds that Lenin was quite mistaken in claiming that his Communist Party was a unique party in the history of the world and had been formed for the first time. Arnold Toynbee asserts that because of its *elan* and structure, the Khalsa of the Sikh society is a true forerunner and prototype of the Communist Party of Lenin.

Sikhism and its apotheosis, the *Khalsa*, have merely a structural affinity and kinship of *elan* with the Communist Party of Lenin in so far as it is essentially an organization of committed elites for furthering the cause of social transformations, but in aims and content it is poles apart from communism, as it is irrevocably committed to social pluralism and freedom of conscience, tolerance, and recognition of the human individual as an end in himself, and not an expendable limb in the beehive society of communism. This aspect of the matter, Arnold Toynbee has failed to appreciate and point out in his great book.

Above all, Sikhism is irrevocably committed to the doctrine of the existence of God, the one almighty God, as the beginning and the end of all, that is and that shall be, *al-awwal wal-akhir*, as the Quran puts it.

Sikhs are an international community, about ten millions in numbers, mainly concentrated in the north-west of India, but found in most continents and countries of the globe : in India, Malaysia, Africa, Europe, South and North Americas including Canada, Vancouver being

their first settlement in North America. There is a quip, current in European as well as in Asiatic countries to the effect that wherever life exists and is sustainable on earth, the potato and the Sikh are bound to reach there sooner or later.

Arnold Toynbee, in his latest - one of the latest books (not the latest) - *East to West*, has observed to the effect that if the human race survives its follies at all - he is doubtful that it will survive - but he says that if it survives its follies at all, Sikhs shall surely be there as a vigorous, hardy and go-getting *homo sapiens* on this planet.

Sikhs are universally admitted as excelling most other races of mankind in the basic activities of man : production of food, manipulation of tools and fighting. As agriculturalists, artisans and manual labourers they excel many other races and human groups and as soldiers they are inferior to no group in the history of the world, in bravery inspired by ethical considerations.

This religion of Sikhism was founded, as we know, by Guru Nanak, who was born in the year 1469 A.D. *Guru*, in Sikh terminology, means, a prophet and a world-teacher, and Sikhism is a prophetic religion based on a definitive revelation like semitic religions of the west, and it, therefore, can be clearly contradistinguished from the eastern religions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, which have an anonymous mysticism as their source of validity. In this sense, understood this way, Guru Nanak is the first prophet born in India, as one who claims that the religion he preaches is a revealed religion. A revealed religion is one which is imparted through a chosen individual as a consequence of his encounter with God. It is not the result of mystical experience of a facet of reality acquired by an individual through discipline or innate *propensity*. It is not an impersonal empathy with some eternal truths that are seen by individuals, but which in their origin and formulation are wholly and utterly un-man-made, *apaurashaya*, such as the Vedas are claimed to be. The religious truths which Guru Nanak preaches have been revealed to him, so Guru Nanak claims, through a direct and face-to-face encounter with God at some level of consciousness, about which our psychological insights and the verbal technology, we have acquired and fashioned to express our ideas, are still almost purblind—not only inadequate but almost purblind, incapable of even comprehending and feeling as to what

levels of consciousness are, where the phenomenon of revelation takes place.

The turning point in the life of Guru Nanak as a prophet and the founder of a revealed religion came in the year 1496 when he was twenty-seven years of age. During these days he was performing his official duties as the Royal storekeeper of the Prince of Sultanpur in the Punjab. He used to, these days, pass out into reveries, almost amounting to trances. On one such occasion, while supervising weighment of official stores, he stopped dead at the count of 'thirteen' which in Punjabi is, *terā*, meaning also, "I am thine." And Nanak went on repeating "*terā, terā,*" while measure after measure of stores was being passed out. As would be the case anywhere, complaints were made to the Prince about the way in which this Hindu high official, under a Muslim government, was recklessly squandering the government stores. Not many days after, while the matter of investigating into his alleged misconduct was still engaging the attention of the Prince, Nanak went, as usual, to take his morning dip in the small river that during those days flowed very near, by the side of the town of Sultanpur. This river is now only seasonal and not perennial as in the fifteenth century. This river, called the *Bein*, is still there, but comes to life only during the rainy season or when the high mountain snows melt. It is recorded in the *Life Stories* of Guru Nanak, which are called *Janamsakhis*, that after entering the waters of the *Bein* for a dip, he stayed there for full three days and was assumed as drowned and dead, and lost. On the morning of the fourth day he came out of the waters of the river to the spot where his servant, who was to be his lifelong companion; Mardana, was faithfully waiting with Nanak's clothes. The first words that he uttered on emerging from the waters are recorded. He said, "There is no Hindu, no Muslim." It was a fit formula for the commencement of his divine mission of reconciling the two antagonistic and warring cultures, the Aryan and the Semitic, by pointing out that deeper down in the two, there lay a common substratum of identity. Those acquainted with the doctrines and practices of Yoga know that trance, while submerged for long periods extending over days and months, under deep waters, is a Yogic skill that may be acquired either by appropriate discipline or as a God-given skill from birth. It is called, *jala-stambha-samādhi*, in ancient Yogic texts. There is no need to search for other

explanations of Nanak's disappearance in the midstream of Bein for full three days.

All the chroniclers of the *Stories* of the life of Guru Nanak agree that Nanak received his first revelation and his first commission to found and preach a new religion and a new way of life on this occasion.

A revelation is not a psychological process in the Individual's mind. It is an encounter with Reality, and the individual does not make a spiritual discovery through his own mental *cogitation*, but he encounters God and this distinction is fundamental. Henceforth, Nanak becomes Guru Nanak; Nanak, the World Teacher. This encounter is described in the *Janam-sakhis* in the following words :

"As God willed, Nanak, his devotee, was escorted to His presence, to the divine presence, and then a cup filled with Liquid of Immortality was given him, accompanied by the command : 'Nanak, pay attention. This is the cup of holy adoration of my Name; drink it. I am with thee, and thee do I bless and exalt. Go, rejoice in my Name, the Name of God, and preach to others to do the same. Let this be thy calling:'"

Guru Nanak himself refers to this divine assignment with deep gratitude. He says : "I, an unemployed minstrel, was assigned a very rewarding task, indeed."¹

Guru Nanak thereafter resigned his post and started on long journeys into all directions of the then accessible civilized world, to preach the religion of the Name of God, which is Sikhism. His missionary journeys, throughout the then accessible civilized world of Asia : India, Ceylon, Inner Himalayas, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Arabia and parts of Turkey, are recorded in his *Life-Stories*. He, the Guru, himself, recorded his own revelations, as did his successors, which add up to the Sikh scripture. This scripture is now deemed as the only and final guide of the community, and in all Sikh temples the scripture occupies a focal point of Sikh congregations, placed upon a high altar and revered. The worship of the Sikhs mainly consists of reading, exposition, and singing of the hymns in praise of God as recorded in the scripture.

1. *haun dhādhī vekāru kārāi lāiā.*
(ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ)

During his missionary journeys, which are recorded as four *udasis*, or odysseys, into the four directions of the globe, Guru Nanak laid down and demonstrated the true application of basic Sikh doctrines on which the Sikh society was to be based. It was during his journey to the Inner Himalayas on the mountain of legendary *Kailash* near the celestial lake of *Mansrovar*, that he explained the first priority principle on which the Sikh society was to be based. This was his third journey. It was a long journey and it was to culminate high up in the *Kailash* mountain, the home of Yogis and Hindu gods. He travelled deep into the Inner Himalayas, crossing Nepal and some portions of the Western Tibet, reaching his destination, the holy lake and the mountain summit, both of which places now, unfortunately, are under the occupation of Communist China and our pilgrims cannot go there, where they have been going and visiting for thousands of years past. It is here that he made a most explicit statement of his doctrine that truth must be the basis of all religions, and further, that the religion must be socially committed. Bhai Gurdas, a very learned man of Sikhism—sometimes he is described as the St. Paul of Sikhism—tells us that when the Yogis residing in these inaccessible regions asked Guru Nanak as to "how did the news go in the world of the mortals"—*māt lok vichi kiā varīārā*—the reply of the Guru was sharp and to the point: "The society has become rotten to its core." And here he raised an accusing finger at these Yogis, adding: "And Sires, you are the guilty ones, for, society cannot be guided and sustained without men of high sensitivity and culture, but you, who possess it, have become escapees." *sachu chandramā kūr andhiārā, siddha, chhap baiṭhe parbatīn kauṁ jagatṛa kau pār utārā*.²

In this doctrine, he answers the question of questions, the question which has been, for thousands of years, worrying the sensitive and thinking man and which question still remains finally unanswered. This question of questions is as to whether the carriers of the grace, the liberated men, the men who have achieved the highest apex of spiritual evolution, whether they should rise like lions or die like lambs; whether spiritual elite should withdraw into wilderness to bear witness, or act as leaven to the lump. Guru Nanak's answer is clear: it is that every fully liberated person must be socially and politically committed, and must return back

2. Gurdas, Bhai, *Vārān*, 1.29.

to the society to serve and guide it, to elevate it, and to preserve its basic ethical and spiritual values.

The next doctrine of Sikh society was demonstrated by Guru Nanak when he visited Mecca, the holy sanctuary of Islam. The story is well-known to almost all who have any acquaintance with Sikhism. This happened during the fourth sojourn of Guru Nanak, when he went to the west, to which direction he travelled by sea, to visit Mecca along with the Muslim pilgrims of India. Inside this holy sanctuary, when doubts arose on account of his behaviour as to whether he was a Muslim or a Hindu, he was accosted with the question : "Who are you, and what is the book that you carry under your arm, for it is not the holy Quran. Tell us, please, according to this book that you carry, whether the Muslim religion is true or the Hindu religion." —*puchhan khohl kitāb nīn hindū vaḍā ki mus-salmānoī*.³

The reply of the Guru is not only clear but fearless, particularly when you keep in view the situation in which this reply was made. The Guru said : "Oh, pilgrims, neither those who profess Islam nor those who profess Hinduism are superior, one to the other. It is the practice and its moral quality that makes one individual superior to the other in the eyes of God, and not mere lip profession ." *bābā ākkhe hājīo subh amlān bajhoṁ dono roī*.⁴

Likewise, the third doctrine was demonstrated by his 'exclamations' against the tyranny involved in the invasion of India by Babur, the Mughal, in the year 1521 A.D. He heard of this invasion while he was still in Central Asia, and, it would seem, that he hurriedly returned to India through Hussan Abdal which is now the Sikh shrine of Panja Sahib. *Bābar-bānī*, gives the proper reaction of a cultured, socially committed man towards situations of this kind, where a strong and powerful tyrant tramples over the rights and lives of those who have got neither the means nor the power to defend themselves and nor is there anybody else to defend them. The heart rending cry and audacious question of Guru Nanak put to God is the *Bābar-bānī* on witnessing the misery caused by Babur's brutalities to undefended and unarmed civilians of India,

3. *Ibid*, 1.33-3

4. *Ibid*. 133-4

"just as a herd of meek cows is attacked by a bloodthirsty tiger", as Guru Nanak puts it: *Sihh pave jā vagge*. There is clearly the seed of his new concept of individual, personal and human responsibility of man to be directly concerned with evil on this earth, and to resist it instead of either remaining unconcerned and high and dry about it or hoping for extra-terrestrial intervention to destroy it. Guru Nanak has said in the revelation called, *Bābar bānī*: "So much misery and so much anguish caused to the people and their lamentations, you, O, God, saw and heard all of them and yet you were neither moved nor did you intervene."⁵ This is the harsh cry and the question of Guru Nanak in relation to a situation of this kind, implicating that under such circumstances it becomes the duty of an enlightened and spiritually committed person to come forward and to organize with those who are similarly cultured, to resist evil—resist evil at all stages, resist in the hope and in the faith that God will give success, but never to sit in the corner, or the fence, feeling that it is none of my concern or saying that it is the concern of God alone, whose duty it is to send somebody to stop this evil. The implication is clear: God helps those who help themselves. This distinguishes the society that Guru Nanak founded, from most of the previous societies that have existed in the East, or elsewhere.

These doctrines which Guru Nanak had thus enunciated and were, by the successor-Gurus, demonstrated in relation to individual and contingent situations, were applied to the practical task of setting up a new society, the Sikh society, and, the last of the Sikh prophets, the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, ordained an Order of the Sikh elites, the Khalsa, who now represent and spearhead the tasks of Sikh religion, and are recognisable throughout the world as bearded and turbaned Sikhs. As it is, Guru Nanak, the first Nanak, had already declared that such elite must organize to leaven and elevate society, using 'organization', *sangat* and 'the idea', *sabad*, *gurbani*, as the only legitimate levers available to man for this uplifting. Then the perfected yogins in the Kailash Mountains asked Guru Nanak specifically as to how does he propose to eradicate evil and to oppose the tyrant, because no individual has the

5. *eti mār pai kurlapai tain kī dard na āiā*
(ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕੁਰਲਾਏ ਤੈਂ ਕੀ ਦਰਦ ਨ ਆਇਆ)

power to eradicate evil, it being universal and inherent, and no unarmed citizen or group of them has the capacity to oppose and halt the tyranny of a person who has power of well-organised arms at his command, that is, controls the state, and who is bent upon running amuck over the society. And these perfected yogins asked Guru Nanak, "Do you possess some miraculous, supranatural powers by which you can cure these two rootal maladies of the society? If you have not, as a mere human being, you are utterly helpless. If you have any such powers, any other means by which you think that the elites and the cultured people can halt the progress of evil, then please tell us."⁶ The reply of Guru Nanak to these queries of the yogins is recorded. The Guru said, "I possess no such miraculous powers as you refer to. I have no extra-psychical potency to do what an average, cultured man cannot do, but I am convinced that man, provided he is properly cultured, properly committed, and takes a serious view of life, a man, a human being, with all his failings and with all his imperfections, is capable not only of halting the progress of evil, but sometimes stopping and eradicating the evil. And the levers which he can use, or which I propose and advise for use in the society which I want to found in the world, are two." The Guru is recorded as having said, "I want to use two levers: human organization of those seriously committed to the task of defending goodness and to the task of opposing evil; and I want to use a second lever, of the authentic and true 'idea' of religion which is revealed in the conscience of highly sensitive and cultured man. The 'idea' and the 'organisation',⁷ which are both human, with these two levers I hope to be able not only to resist the evil, not only to halt the progress of evil in the society, but to elevate and exalt society to heights yet undreamt of, *jini māṇas te devate kīe*.⁸ Through this society I hope to evolve deified men on this earth, who will be God-like, God- united and yet human."

Such are the basic social and spiritual principles of Sikhism as enunciated by its founder and as perfected by his nine successors, and as apotheosized by the last Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, into the *Order of the Khalsa*, who now have the responsibility and the assignment of setting

6. Gurdas, Bhai, *Varan*, 1-42

7. *Ibid.* 1.43

8. ਜਿਨਿ ਮਾਣਸ ਤੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਕੀਏ . . .

out these directives of Guru Nanak into practice, and who now bear the heavy burden of this responsibility of establishing a world-society in which the growth and unchecked march of evil is stopped and the evil is ultimately, if not eradicated, controlled and contained. Such a high task it is that lies on the shoulders of those whom you sometimes see in various parts of the world wearing turbans and unshorn hair. These turbans and unshorn hair are not symptomatic of some kind of lack of modern cultural view point. They are the exteriorisation of a psyche and of a sense of such high mission the like of which the history of the world does not know, that which has not ever been conceived or practised before.

After the passing of Guru Gobind Singh and after the ordination of the *Khalsa*, since the beginning of the eighteenth century when Guru Gobind Singh passed away, the Sikhs have played, by no means an insignificant part in the history of Asia and, indirectly, the history of the world. In 1711 they set up a republic in the heartland of the Moghul Empire in India, wherein they gave the land to the tillers in a feudal society, proclaimed equality of all men as citizens of a state, and declared that power emanated from and justly belonged to the people and not to a hereditary privileged class. These remarkable and most modern principles, which were not only avowed but which were put into practice, although for a very short while, are historical phenomena with which not many people in the West or even the East are acquainted, but which, if properly understood and appreciated, would make men marvel as to how it was that in a conservative, in a tranquil and progress and-struggle-avoiding East such revolutionary and remarkably dynamic ideas not only sprang but could be put into practice and could be applied to actual polity of a state which was founded, but which, unfortunately, did not last. This state of the Sikhs lasted only for six or seven years. Emperor Bahadur Shah marched with all the resources of the Moghul Empire from Deccan, the distant south, to destroy this Sikh republic in the north of India, which extended from confines of Ludhiana to the outskirts of Panipat, the rivers *Ravi* to *Jamuna*. It was posited in the heart of the north of India, and if it had endured, or had it been possible to make it endure for another forty or fifty years, not only the Moghul Empire would have fallen much earlier than it did, but in India itself such a social and political revolution would have been brought about that it would have been India which might

have been the forerunner of the modern ideas of equality, liberty and brotherhood which we now credit to the French Revolution, and which now have inspired and enthused modern political activity during the last one century.

There was yet another principle which the Sikhs, inspired as they were by the teachings of the Gurus, proclaimed and actually applied in this short-lived republic. It was on the 10th of December, 1710 that an Imperial Ordinance was issued from Delhi by the Moghul Emperor, Bahadur Shah, which runs to the effect that : *Nānak-prastān rā harkujā kih biyāband ba-qatl rasānahd*—"Every Sikh, wherever he is found, wherever he is seen, should be put to death without any hesitation and without any further thought." This was the solution which the Moghul Empire in India had conceived of, to solve, what they might have described as, 'the Sikh problem' and it is even a fiercer and a more frightful notion than the one which entered the head of Hitler during the Second World War, when he wanted to accomplish, what he euphemistically called, 'the solution of the Jewish problem', by exterminating every living Jew wherever he could be found and apprehended. This Ordinance was issued on the 10th of December, 1710, and it was against those people who were small in numbers but were the bearers of the principles of a new society, for the purpose of setting up a modern polity for the guidance of world society in the future centuries to come. Their reaction to this imperial edict of totalitarian and utmost barbarism is worth noting.

As I have already pointed out, on the 10th of December, 1710, the royal Ordinance of ruthless destruction of all Sikhs, was issued and on 19th April, 1711, hardly three months and a few days afterwards, an ordinance in reply was issued by the Sikh Republic under the seal of the state and sign manual of their chief executive, Banda Singh Bahadur, which said, which proclaimed : 'We do not oppose Muslims or Islam, but only tyranny and usurpation of power. The substance of this ordinance of the Sikh Republic is recorded in contemporary documents, such as Persian *Ruqati*—*Aminud-davallah*, *Dastural-Insha*, and the *Imperial Daily Diaries*, the day to day records made by the Authority of what passed in the royal court. they are now available for everybody to see, that hardly three months after this drastic Ordinance which was issued for the utter

destruction of the Sikh people, the Sikhs had the political maturity and the greatness of heart to reply by issuing an Ordinance which said, 'We do not oppose Muslims and we do not oppose Islam. We only oppose tyranny, and we only oppose the usurpation of political power which belongs to the people and not to privileged individuals or to Moghuls.' This outlook, this temper, this sentiment, is so democratic, of such high cultural calibre and such exalted ethics, that it would not be easy—you may search the pages of the contemporary history of those days, of seventeenth and eighteenth and nineteenth century history—you will not come across its equal or its parallel in the political policies and practices of a state anywhere in the world of those days.

After that, ladies and gentlemen, when this initial effort of establishing a Sikh republic in the heart of northern India failed, in which republic the Sikhs tried to apply the high principles of ethics and politics enunciated by the Sikh Gurus, there comes a period of about half a century of relentless persecution and genocide pogroms against the Sikh people by two contending empires, the mightiest empires of Asia of those days, the Moghul and the Pathan Empire. The Pathan Empire persecuted and tried to uproot the Sikhs and to destroy them, root and branch, under the leadership of Ahmed Shah Abdali, one of the greatest generals of the stature of Chenghiz Khan, Halagu and Nadir, the greatest generals which Asia has produced. Under his might and under his generalship, and that of his successors, for almost fifty years, the Pathans as well as the Moghuls tried their worst and tried their utmost to cow down the Sikhs, to finish the Sikhs and to make them submit. But the Sikhs, withstood this terrible onslaught. They neither submitted nor abandoned their harsh cry of 'death or liberty', a sentiment foreign to and unknown in the Eastern societies, ancient or modern. This is a sentiment which is unique in the history of Asia, though in Europe you do find traces of it. But for fifty years, under the most callous and under the most terrible persecutions, where the aim was complete genocide, the Sikhs not only refused to submit but refused to abandon their cry, "We want death or liberty! We want death or liberty!" And in the end they had their liberty. Sikh supremacy was then established, and then it slid into the form of the Sikh Empire, which was called the *Sarkār-i-Khālṣā*, that is, 'the People Common Wealth', from the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Sikh hegemony then extended from the Jamuna River the heartland of India, to the modern frontiers of Afghanistan, and from Indus up to the Little Tibet, the confines of China. Here, what is most noteworthy is that when the Sikh Commonwealth was undergoing the throes of death by the treacherous British and by the treacherous non-Sikh generals of the Sikh army and by the perfidious non Sikh civil government at Lahore, the Sikhs made fresh conquests into the regions of north Himalayas, conquering and annexing that territory, which has now again been occupied by China, and the Little Tibet. What is of crucial interest in this story is not so much the conquest and the annexation of these most difficult regions at a time when the Sikhs were themselves fighting for their very life, being attacked from the front as well as from the rear, but what is most remarkable about this incident is the Treaty of 1842, by which these areas were annexed to the *Sarkari-Khalsa*, to the Sikh Empire. This treaty is now preserved in the archives of the Government of India at Delhi, and anybody who is so inclined may go and have a look at it. This treaty is between two parties; on one side is mentioned the Emperor of China and the Dalai Lama of Tibet—that is one party in this treaty, and the other party is described as, *Khālsā jio*, the Honourable Khalsa, as representing the people's sovereignty. This idea in itself is so novel and sounds so modern that it would be impossible to find its similitude and its parallel, in those days even in the West. In the West, these ideas, at that time, were filtering into the minds of the people, but they had not yet been put to practical demonstration in relation to a political polity and as operative ideas; people sitting in chairs, people writing pamphlets and people calling themselves revolutionaries—they were considering these ideas and their minds were being stirred by these ideas, and later on these ideas did become of practical importance in the political impulses of the West. But in the West, as yet, these ideas had not been put into concrete political shape, as they had been put by the Sikhs in the year 1842. This high level of evolution of political awareness and instinct was not a common phenomenon.

It was in the middle of the nineteenth century that the British perfidiously attacked the Sikh Commonwealth, after corrupting and buying the Hindu Generals of the Sikh army and the Hindu dominated civil government at Lahore, and during the fierce Anglo-Sikh wars and

battles, the Sikhs as a historian says, "beat the British and their Hindu mercenaries to their knees every time." I am quoting. But the Sikh country was, nevertheless, annexed to the British Empire through treachery at the diplomatic table, into the details of which I need not go here.

Now I come to the years before 1947. Before the First World War, when the ideas of freeing India from the foreign yoke started stirring the minds of the Indian people, Sikhs were the spear head of this movement. It was from this place, Vancouver, that as far back as the year 1913 a batch of about two hundred Sikhs in all—there were two or three non-Sikhs, the rest of them all were Sikhs, simple, manual labourers and peasants but genuine Sikhs, whose faith in the Guru and the teachings of the Guru was firm and unsullied—these Sikhs sailed from Vancouver with a plan to topple down the British Empire through mutinous activities in the Indian army. They failed. Most of them were arrested; they were hanged. Many of them were sent to the terrible Andaman islands, and they spent their lives there, twenty years, twenty-five years; died there under conditions of imprisonment which you cannot even imagine these days. Such hardships and such terrible conditions of existence they bore, and not a case of a single Sikh is known who either wavered or apologized though many opportunities were offered them to just say one word. "We are sorry for what we have done," and they could come back to their villages and to their lands and live a life of comfort and ease as their other compatriots were doing. (Applause) It is recorded in the official records that whenever these Sikhs were taken to the execution room to be hanged—some of you perhaps know how people are hanged, I know it, I have supervised some hangings as they used to be done during the British period. You put black clothes on the person, previously giving him an opportunity to bathe his body, and then you tie his hands behind him, and then you walk him to the gallows or execution room. You make him stand under the gallows and put the rope around his neck, and then a question is put to him; "Is there anything you want to say as a last word?" First of all: "Answer, are you so-and-so?" He says, "Yes, I am so-and-so." "Well, you are going to be hanged for such-and-such a crime, and now we are going to pull the lever and the rope will kill you, suffocate you to death. Is there anything you want to say before your end comes?" This is the question that is usually put, and its answer is recorded. But to these Sikhs another question

was frequently put : "Are you now prepared to say, 'I am sorry for what I have done,' and the noose will be taken off your neck and you will be set free ?" Each one of them, without an exception, is recorded as saying, "No, I am not sorry for what I have done, and when I take my next birth I will do the same. I want the British to leave and free India." (Applause) And then the question would be put, "Now, so-and-so, what are the last words you want to say before your life on this earth comes to an end ?" In each case—I wouldn't vouchsafe for that but I have seen some of the files. May be in one or two cases, very few cases, not, but generally, they sang the following song : *rāj karegā Khālsā, ākī rahe na koi, khwār hoe sabh milenge bache saran jo hoe. Dillī takhat par bahegī āp Gurū-kī-phauj, rāj karegā Khalsā barī hoegī mauj.* (Applause) 'The people shall rule and no individual shall usurp their sovereignty. The destiny of India shall be shaped by the *Khalsa* and an era of ever-growing affluence and peace shall dawn for mankind.' These are the last words they usually uttered and they are recorded.

There is another incident recorded in the Memoirs (Punjabi) of Bhai Randhir Singh, who spent about, I think, twenty years in British jails. He also belonged to this group, the Mutineers, *ghadarites*, as they were called. It happened, in one jail in the Madras Presidency in the South of India. I have forgotten the name of the jail, into which about a dozen Sikhs had been brought from the Andamans, and these were the Sikhs about whom the authorities thought they had suffered enough. They were young men, thirty, forty years old when they went to jail, and now they were sixty, seventy, their lives spent under unspeakable horrors and tortures in these hell-houses. They were brought to this jail in the Madras Presidency, as I have already said, and then a Sikh of the Government Secret Police went there in civilian clothes. Previous instructions had come that these five or six, who were known as the most staunch antagonists of the foreign occupation of India, and about whom it was known that their ideological maturity was of a high order, instructions were given previously that they should be accorded slightly better treatment, given better food, less hard labour, to soften them, to mollify them a little. And then one day, three or four days after, this Sikh—his name is, perhaps, also given, he was some high official, he came there and he said, 'I have come from Punjab. I belong to such-and-such village. Most of you know my people, and you,

so-and-so, you, my uncle, are related to me by kinship—you, this, that—' he tried to be friendly and tried to reassure them of his good intentions. And he continued, 'I have been specifically sent here by the British Indian Government and my purpose in coming here is as follows. You did something. The government now realizes that you did it out of conviction. The government does not think that you are ordinary criminals. On the contrary, the government thinks that you are men of character and of high patriotism, and you have, by now, paid the price of your convictions. The government, after all, is not an inhuman government. It is a human government. Now they propose to open up some areas for colonization. There they also want to allot pieces of land to the villages from which you come, and the government thinks that it would be unfair, not fitting to the sense of fairness of the British, to deprive you people of that to which you are entitled as residents of your villages. Your kinsmen in your villages from which you come have been given plots of land, and the government wants you also to have such plots of land. They don't want you to apologize. We know you will not apologize because you are men of stubborn convictions. All that we want is that when we free you—we will free you and we will also give you free grants of land, and you go and cultivate those lands, but from now onwards, when these lands are given to you and you start farming those lands, you just give us a gentleman's word—no formal apology, nothing of the sort—a gentleman's assurance that you will not participate in any activity which is anti-government.'

They all kept quiet; nobody spoke. And then he said, 'Is there any of you who wants his name to be communicated to the British Indian Government for the allotment of these free grants of land?' All of them simultaneously said, "No". And then there was a European officer who during all these proceedings was sitting silent. He said, "Those of you who want to oppose the British Government till their last breath on this earth, please step one step forward." All those six or so people stepped one step forward. (Applause).

Such was the society which the principles of Sikhism gave birth to, and such is the history and tribulations of this society which, though on the material plane may seem to have failed to make a conspicuous mark, but which, on the plane of principles and on the plane of essences has made such a remarkable imprint, a superior to which would be difficult

to find in the histories of the societies of the world, from ancient times to the modern times.

When in 1947 the British—in 1946 or even earlier, the British gave it out that they no longer wanted to hold India and it was known that they cannot hold India and it was also known that the British would now quit, and they wanted to hand over the sovereignty and the political power of India to the Indians themselves, then the question arose, how and to whom should this political power be transferred. I will not go into details, because there is neither time nor would it be pertinent on this occasion in the short time we have at our disposal to go into these details. But the broad outlines are that the British Parliament, who were penultimate authority in this matter of the transfer of power, declared unequivocally that after the British quit India, there are three peoples, distinct peoples, who are the legitimate heirs to the sovereignty of India, and whatever these three peoples or three 'nations' agree to amongst themselves, their decision the British will accept before they quit India, though they tendered it as their own advice that it was the wish of the British people that they should leave India united and intact, and it should not be divided into bits. That would be a tragedy for India, a setback, they felt, to what they had accomplished while they occupied India, and it would also be not in the interests of the international political situation. On all these grounds the British advised, vehemently and consistently advised, that India should remain one and united and that these three, the only legitimate heirs to the sovereignty of India, should come to some kind of mutual agreement, so that the sovereignty of India, the political power of the State of India, can be transferred peacefully, so that India may remain one and united. It is at this period that offers were made, either for keeping India intact and one, or for dividing it into three parts. I am only talking here about the case of the Sikhs. I will leave out the Muslims, they have achieved their Pakistan as they wanted it. Under what circumstances they wanted it, who forced them to, whether they were badly advised or just obliged, are questions which are of no practical interest now. What has happened and cannot be easily undone. But about the Sikhs, definite, concrete and pressing offers were made half a dozen times by the Muslim League, as well as by the British, to the Sikhs to carve out and to have an area for themselves in which they can also be a free people, not altogether unlike the Hindus and Muslims are going to be. There is no doubt about it,

because I am a personal witness to some of these occasions and there is such heavy and credible documentary evidence on the point that it cannot be doubted or denied. But on each and every occasion, totally trusting the commitments which the Hindu leaders of the Indian Congress had made to the Sikhs, the Sikhs always spurned these offers. Whenever the British made these offers, the Sikhs said, "No, we tie our destiny irrevocably to the destiny of India because India is our holy land and our Fatherland, and the type of society which Guru Gobind Singh wanted to found and the type of world-society which the Khalsa wants to spearhead can more easily and more firmly be established, to begin with, on the soil of India, because India is likely to be more readily recipient of those ideas than most of the rest of the world. Therefore, our destiny lies with India and not outside it. The promises and commitments which the Hindu leaders made to the Sikhs were as follows : that after the British quit and the Sikhs have refused to accept the offers of separate, sovereign or semi-sovereign areas for themselves made by others, after that happens, the Hindu majority—the Indian Congress, the mouthpiece of the Hindus as they rightly regarded themselves—the Hindu majority community solemnly promised, first, that they will not promulgate any Constitution for the future government of India which does not have the free concurrence and assent of the Sikhs; two, that an area in the north of India, with an autonomous status shall be carved out in which, in the flowery words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "the Sikhs also might feel the glow of freedom," which means, 'there in the Sikhs shall be able to act effectively at the decision-making levels of their state.' These promises were given—from the year 1930 onwards up to the year 1947 these promises were repeatedly given and reiterated, these promises were repeatedly spelt out, and they were repeated by individual leaders and by the formal resolutions of the All-India Congress—again and again, by including, Mahatama Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, and all these people, that, whatever else may come to pass, so far as the Sikhs are concerned the Hindu community and the Hindu people stand irrevocably committed to this promise, which, Jawaharlal Nehru said, while introducing the basic resolution in the Constituent Assembly, in 1950, has the status of a 'religious vow', the promises being, one, no Constitution in India shall be framed to which Sikhs do not give their free, unfettered assent, two, in the north of India an autonomous area will be carved out in which the Sikhs shall be

effective and conclusive at the decision-making levels.

Then the British left India, and the Sikhs stuck to their stand unshakeably, regarding sacred their understanding with the Hindu leaders, but after August 1947 nothing was done to put these promises into effect, and they seemed to have been forgotten, and slowly and slowly attempts were made to win over and corrupt the individual integrity of Sikh leaders. And then In 1950 the Constitution of India was framed. Nothing was included therein which may have even the remotest semblance to a fulfilment of these two solemn commitments which were made to the Sikhs. Thus, the Sikhs had been tricked to give up their right of sovereignty, their right of being legitimate heirs to the power and sovereignty of India. And when in 1953, Master Tara Singh asked Jawaharlal Nehru, "Why is it that you people who kept us misled under false promises, as it now seems, for over twenty years, and which promises you repeated again and again, solemnly and on behalf of the entire Hindu people, why have you now gone back on them ?" The reply of Jawaharlal Nehru was pat and unabashed : "Circumstances have now changed."

Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, the constitutionality of these political tricks and manoeuvres might be debatable, but their gross unethicity and cynicity, their low perfidious character, is all too obvious. In the Constitution Assembly, when the Act was passed in 1950, the only two Sikh, Akali Dal representatives there, stood up and they declared—a declaration which is inscribed in the permanent proceedings of the Indian Parliament : "The Sikhs do not accept this Constitution. The Sikhs reject this Constitution." Nobody paid the slightest attention to what they were saying, although these Sikhs refused to sign the original copy of the Indian Constitution, which now lies displayed in the library of the Indian Parliament House. They, the Sikhs, were just ignored, just as you would ignore the pariah dogs in the street when you are walking back home after a day's work well-done, completely ignored. This was done in gross violation of the provisions of the British Parliament's 'Transfer of Power Act of 1947', also. In that Act it is specifically provided that the Indian government at the Centre shall be a Federal, loose-centre government, having only powers on three subjects : communications, defence and foreign affairs. All other powers shall go to the federating units, the states. It shall be a federal government, it shall not be a highly

centralized government. In spite of these legal provisions, the Constituent Assembly, which was packed with the brute majority of only one community, made a constitution which establishes a highly centralized government, entirely in the hands of one community, the majority community, and completely denies the Sikh identity. And ever-since 1947, persistent, calculated, well-planned and regular attempts have been made on the cultural, on the political and on the economic levels, not only to disintegrate the Khalsa, the collectivity of the Sikh people, once and for all, but to weaken the Sikh citizens economically in such a manner that they are reduced to the status of what is known as, peonage, so that the highest ambition of a Sikh citizen after some time might remain delimited only to become a peon, a night watchman at the palatial door of a rich Hindu industrialist, a driver of his commodious, foreign-imported car, and a mere lowest rank soldier in the army, so as to provide cannon-fodder whenever the rulers of Delhi wish to pick up a quarrel with somebody.

These, Ladies and Gentlemen, are hard facts, and if I have an ampler opportunity, either before you or before any other independent forum of the world, I am in a position to, and I am confident that I can, establish that what I say is literally and more than amply true. There it is, Gentlemen, or, Ladies, where we now stand.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have taken a great deal of your time, and I am grateful that you have heard me with much patience and, as I have noticed, with great attention. I would, therefore, conclude, and try to sum-up in a few propositions that what I have been trying to convey here.

(1) Sikhism is not a Hindu sect but a prophetic religion and a unique political society, guided and led by an Order of the elite Sikhs, the Khalsa, whose unshorn hair and turbans are merely an exteriorisation of their religious psyche, natural, spontaneous, evolutionary, and authentic. This is the first proposition which I have tried to elucidate before you.

(2) The second proposition which I have tried to make out before you is that Sikhism enjoins a religion grounded in truth alone, a growing truth in the enlightened conscience of man and sternly translated into day-to-day living of individuals.

(3) The third proposition which I have tried to put before you,

to demonstrate before you, is that the Sikhs are committed to help establishment of a world-society which is plural, non coercive. expansive and forward-looking. motivated Godwards, in which there is maximum toleration, ever-growing affluence and minimum of mutually destructive ambition. And on the basis of this, I want to observe in the form of the fourth proposition that :

(4) The mosaic-pattern of Canadian society comes nearest to the Sikh ideal of a world-society, though the Canadian society is not, in every respect and in essence, its replica or prototype.

(5) And the last proposition which I now formulate in precise words is that. while, as Canadian citizens, the Sikhs may look forward to a hopeful and bright future, in India, their historical homeland, they now face the basic problem of their identity and existence, since the control of their own history has been snatched out of their hands and their historical potential has been submerged and throttled.

(6) And I add, that the Sikhs want to live, as all living things do; they do not want to die.

Thank you. (Applause).

(Courtesy : All India Sikh Federation, Vancouver, Canada.)

IMPACT OF SIKHISM ON MODERN INDIA

When thinking of Sikhs in India, the following lines of the modern English poet, James Joyce, somehow come to mind :

"Where they have crouched and crawled and prayed,
I stand the self-doomed unafraid,
Unfellowed, friendless and alone,
Indifferent as the herring bone".

It is this loneliness and onliness of the Sikhs, and, consequently, of Sikhism that has been glaringly under-pinned in the modern India by two circumstances : (1) a lop-sided and inadequate comprehension of the basic conceptual content and significance of Sikhism, and (2) a deep-rooted prejudice against them born out of awareness of the Sikh's discreteness, peculiarity and individuality that cannot be assimilated or digested by the pan-Hinduistic impulse for centralising all political power, total power and paternalistic authority in the hands of the traditional privilegentia of the pyramidal Hindu Society.

Tagore & Gandhi Misjudged the Sikhs

These predicaments of the Sikhs have been active on the political and cultural surface of India continuously during the last half century.

It was the incomparable and prestigious Tagore who, over 50 years ago, wrote his Bengali, *Itihas*, in which he tried to balance up Shivaji Maratha with Guru Gobind Singh. Forgetting his own poetic insight that-

"Lo, a jeweller has come to the garden ! He wants to test the excellence of a rose against his touchstone—"

He set the intellectual fashion of pronouncing upon Guru Gobind Singh's fall from the highest spiritual ideals of Guru Nanak and the

supposed decay of Sikh society as evidenced by their continued interest in the profession of arms, even under the hated British, and their failure to have produced a painter or a poet capable of arresting attention of the glorious 'golden Bengal', during those days of spurious sunshine of the Tagore era, when 'it was heaven to be alive'.

It was this Tagorean appraisal which Mahatma Gandhi, in his own prosaic way, summed up round about 1930 in the *Young India* by paying Guru Gobind Singh (and the Sikhs) the left handed compliment that the Guru was a "misguided patriot", and in reply to the report that Lord Krishna himself was not so averse to the use of arms by men of the highest culture, angrily reacted by expressing amazement at those who could be so stupid as to place Guru Govind Singh on to such lofty a pedestal where Lord Krishna, the *Ishtadeva* of the Hindu race, including Mahatma Gandhi himself, stood by natural rights ! Thus the argument was concluded, as far as the Sikhs were concerned, but its true nature was exposed only more than a quarter of century later by Arnold Toynbee, who in his book, *Historian's Approach to Religion*, said: "Sikhism originated as a concordance of Hinduism and Islam and fell from this religious height into a political trough because the Sikh Gurus, Hargovind and Govind Singh ... succumbed to the temptation to use force."

Gandhiji preferred that Harijans become Muslim rather than Sikh !

Tagore and Gandhi were critical of Guru Govind Singh and Sikhism precisely, because (a) Sikhism refuses to submit to brute political force as valid in its own right and irrespective of religion, and (b) it declares legitimate use of force in defence of human values, not only permissible but incumbent upon men of high culture. Both these propositions are anathema to the scale of Christian values that obfuscated the minds of Tagore and Gandhi through the *maya* of *Brahmoism* and *ahimsa*. This judgment of modern India on Guru Govind Singh and Sikhism, is not a truly Hindu judgment; it is essentially a Christian judgment, a pseudo-Hindu judgment.

The second circumstance assumed concrete expression when in the early thirties of this century the great Mahatma Gandhi, somewhat aberrated from his usual recitude, in making a public condemnation of a

pact between Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Dr. Ambedkar for mass conversion of five crores of untouchables of India to Sikhism. The terms of this pact had been privately disclosed to Gandhi on the strict understanding that they shall not be made public till the parties to it agree to their publication. Mahatma Gandhi, however, must have felt that the very idea of this pact was replete with such dangerous potentialities for the Hindus that it was a fit case wherein a great soul and a great public leader might commit a breach of faith to avert serious consequences. "It would be far better that the crores untouchables of India get converted to Islam (and thus join a social system that is a polarity to Hindu society) than that they become Sikhs," he angrily proclaimed. In this quotation the words in brackets have been added by me. It was to avert this disaster that Mahatma Gandhi eventually entered on a fast unto death to wean the untouchables away from separateness being accorded to them under the Communal Award.

Sikhism—The Yeast of Modern Hinduism

Why have the Sikhs and Sikhism created these unhappy reactions amongst the Hindus of modern India, when the religious postulates of Sikhism are not hostile to those of Hinduism and when their historical role constitutes a splendid service to the prestige and prevalence of Hinduism and the Hindus as a people ?

The Sikhs have not tried to set up an antagonistic social system to that of the Hindu society, even though they repudiate its basic concepts of Varanashram-dharma. They uphold the fundamental insights into Reality, which are peculiarly Hindu, such as *karma*, *dharma*, *punar-janama* and *maya*, though only after imparting them with new and extended conceptual contents. In the development of the course of History, they have firmly and vigorously upheld the right and privilege of the Hindu race and Hinduism, to independent existence and to peaceful propagation.

Let us briefly look at the ferment which Sikhism has brought about in the parent society out of which the modern Hindu polity and the modern Hinduism have flowered. What are the beacon stars of all that is Hinduism and Hindus today ? Name, Aurobindo Ghosh, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, the Maratha upsurge under Shivaji, the deathless insubordination of

Rana Partap, the Vedic nostalgia of the Arya Samaj, and you have almost given the answer.

The Influence on Ramakrishna Paramhansa

What is the contribution of Sikhism to all this ? By far the most startling postulate of Sikhism is that the true end of man is not a static union with God which culminates in re-absorption of the individual into the Absolute Reality, but the emergence of a race of God-conscious men, who remain earth-aware and thus operate in the mundane world of the phenomena, with the object of transforming and spiritualising it into a higher and more abundant plane of existence "The God-conscious man is animated with an intense desire to do good in this world," says Guru Grantha. In the past, the aim of the highest religious discipline was taken and accepted as the attainment of identity with or propinquity of God. It was not thought in terms of utilising the God-consciousness for transforming and spiritualising the life on earth, and the humanity. It is this revolutionary postulate of Sikhism which is the true prototype of the sophisticated philosophy of the modern Hindu sage, Aurobindo Ghosh, though there is no concrete evidence to suggest that he is directly indebted to the Sikh thought. Those, however, who know how basic and revolutionary postulates of this kind are capable of influencing men and minds, far separated by distance and time from the original epiphany of the doctrine, may perceive no difficulty in seeing the connection between the two.

In this context, it is interesting to recall that not long ago, when Ramakrishna Paramhansa was at his most critical stage of theophanic development, it was a Sikh ascetic, *udasi*, Totapuri who imparted to the Paramhansa, the Sikh esoteric instruction efficacious for removing impediments on the spiritual path, and is why the most illustrious *chela* of the Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, so often uttered and introduced into his *vāhegurū*, the Sikh mystic formula.

When Shivaji's Guru Ramdas met Guru Hargobind

Again, the Maratha upsurge of the eighteenth century, the pride and symbol of the political consciousness and self-respect of the modern

Hindu nationalism, is admitted as having been directly inspired and nourished by the teachings of Ramdas *Samarth*, the spiritual guide of the great Shivaji and is a true, though obscure, fact of history that Ramdas *Samarth* is directly indebted to the Sikh teachings imparted to him when he met the Sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind, in Kashmir, in 1634. As the Gurumukhi manuscript (Khalsa College Library, Amritsar, circa 1780) *Pothi Punjab Sakhian*, recounts, the Guru taught the Maratha saint that the essence of Sikhism is to be an ascetic within and secular without, for, Guru Nanak taught mankind to transcend the little ego and the appearances, but not to renounce the "world," whereupon the Maratha saint exclaimed, "this appeals to my mind."

The inspirer and preceptor of the founder of the Arya Samaj, Vrijanand, a high caste Brahmin, was a native of the Sikh centre of religion, Kartarpur in the Punjab, who had before setting down at Varanasi as a Veda-learned man, imbibed the Sikh declaration in his childhood that 'unless mankind pays heed to that which is the true essence of all Vedas, namely, the doctrine of the Name, they shall remain confused and misdirected.'

As for Rana Pratap, it is an obscure fact of history that twice, during his periods of despondence and depression, he was visited by the elder son of Guru Nanak, Srichand, by special invitation to the Rana's Rajputana haunts, to encourage and succour him in his steadfastness in defiance of the alien imperial authority at Delhi. This unmistakably shows that the seminal ideas of Sikhism have moulded and shaped the entire history of modern India.

Sikhism—Hinduism's Bridge with Modernity

In the realm of ideas, Sikhism, by interpreting the concept of *maya*, *karma*, and *dharma*, has almost revolutionised the static Hindu attitude that constitutes such a serious impediment to the Hindu society coming to terms with the modern world. Sikhism repudiates that the institutes of Hindu caste-system are genetically *primaeval*, though it concedes its typical validity. Sikhism accepts karma, but not its mechanical inexorability, and subordinates its operativeness to the Will and Grace of a Personal God. Sikhism accepts the immutability of the concept of *dharma* but denies its ontological relationship with the four fold division of Hindu

society. Thus Sikhism removes the fundamental obstacles that stand in the way of Hinduism coming to living terms with the modern world and idioms of thought. It is the claim of Sikhism that Islam, as religion, is not a contrast, an opposite of Hinduism as religion. The contrast is, between Islam and Hinduism as political societies and social systems.

Therefore, the Sikh Scripture declares that "Provided the Moslems abjure the political aims and ambitions of Islam, and sincerely accept compassion as the mainspring of religion and spiritual purification as its aim, Hinduism will lift the ban on ritualistic impurity now labelled against them." This is declared by Guru Arjun in the Chapter, *Rag Maru*, of the Guru Granth. Sikhism, therefore, encouraged and strove for a lasting rapprochement between Hinduism and Islam *qua* religions pure, and also as socio-political societies, for not only their co-existence (i.e. as mutual toleration without mutual interference) but also their pro-existence (i.e. as limbs of a single united nation), thus for the first time, in modern times, proclaiming the validity of a plural society as a political nation.

Is not precisely this that modern Hindu polity is in search of, under the alien banners of 'secularism'?

Sikhs put New Life in North India

And above all, modern Hindu society is in desperate need of sources of such strength as can enable it to defend its newly acquired political sovereignty and thus sustain its image as a viable people in the modern world.

Let us take some lessons and light from history, for those who neglect history, pass out of the mainstream of history.

The ancient Greek historical sources, Diodorus, Arrian, Plutarch, consistently testify to the courage, toughness and the warlike qualities of all classes of the Hindus of Northern India whom Alexander encountered during his Indian raid in the fourth century B.C., from Peshawar to Beas. Then came the country of the Brahmins", bemoans Diodorus, and even "these philosophers gave Alexander much trouble."

Now jump over a millennium and we encounter the friendly visit of Hieun Tsang, the Chinese *bhikshu*, who leisurely travelled from Peshawar to Thanesar in the seventh century, observed sympathetically and recorded

objectively. Throughout his *Travel Memoirs* he testifies that the entire population of this region is "timid and listless". Jump another three centuries and read the records of the historians of the terrible Mahmud of Ghazni including the sophisticated Al-Bairuni. Spy between the lines of the entire Elliot and Dawson's *History of India*. (As told by her own historians). None of them is particularly impressed by the manliness, bravery or the war-potential for self-defence of the Hindus. In the dawn of the thirteenth century, Mohammad Ghori, the Capturer of Delhi (1203), found the Hindus as "contemptible cowards", *Kāfirān-e-buzdil*, by no means a justified castigation, but nevertheless made. Do we know and remember what Balban, the Sultan of Delhi in the fourteenth century, tells us, according to *Tarikh-i-Ferozshahi* ?

I know well that no Hindu ruler can raise his hand against the army of Delhi, because, the armies of the Rais and the Ramas, though consisting of a lakh *paiks* (footmen), and a lakh *dhanuks* (bowmen), cannot face my army. Barely six or seven thousand horsemen of Delhi are enough to ravage or destroy them.

In the fifteenth century Sikhism was born in Northern India and in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh founded the Order of the Khalsa that "de-based" spiritualism, "misguided" patriotism and "infected" pure Hinduism with some thing more dreadful than the conquering and temple-destroying Islam. In 1709, the Sikhs, in implementation of the objectives specified by Guru Gobind Singh himself, proclaimed a sovereign state in the Sirhind region of Northern India under Banda Singh Bahadur, whom the modern Hindu writer delights in insulting by calling him a Hindu *bairagi*, ascetic. The Official Seal of this first indigenous sovereign state in Northern India, after almost a millennium of foreign subjugation, bore the following legend, the climate and flavour of which is the true prototype of what came, more than a century afterwards to Europe and modern world, in the form of proclamations of the French Revolution, the American Declaration of Independence and the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels. This Sikh legend says :

The ever-expanding prosperity, the strength of arms, the continuous victory and common well-being, are all guaranteed to mankind, by the Guru, Nanak-Govind Singh.¹

دیگ دتغ دفتح دفریت بید رنگ -
یافت از نانک گورو گوہند سنگہ

After Sikhism nobody called Hindus 'Cowards'

In 1799, the Sikhs firmly occupied Lahore and turned back the two-thousand years' flow of foreign invasions into the opposite direction by recovering the long lost north-western Hindu regions. In 1834, during the life-time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Ladakh was taken by the Sikhs and annexed to the Sikh Commonwealth, the *Sarkari-Khalsa*. In April, 1841, under orders of Viceregent Naunihal Singh, Garo was taken and in June 1841, Iskardu. In October, 1842 the Dalai Lama of Tibet and the Emperor of China as one party, and the Sikh people, the *Khalsajio*, as the other party signed the treaty that has given India sovereignty over Ladakh, now lost to the Chinese, and about which the Historical Division of the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India is spreading the mis-statement that Dogra Maharaja Gulab Singh conquered Ladakh and Gilgit for India although they are well aware that Gulab Singh was made a "Maharaja" in 1849, in recognition of "services" he rendered to the British during Anglo-Sikh Wars of 1844-46.

Nobody called Hindus "cowards", "timid" or "listless" after Sikhism had struck roots in India.

In 1764 one Quazi Nur Mohammed of Baluchistan accompanied the armies of Ahmad Shah Abdali on his seventh invasion of India. In his Persian *Jangnameh* (1766), he confesses :

And oft have I called them 'dogs', the Sikhs, the dogs;
 But thus have I wronged them grievously, I, here, concede,
 For, who can justly call, a Sikh, a 'dog' ?
 A Sikh, a Singh, in their own tongue, is the King of the forest.
 And so they, verily, all are, the lions.
 A Sikh is a virtual lion in the battlefield.
 A Sikh is of royal blood blue in times of peace.

George Forester, the famous author of *The Journey* (London, 1798), in a letter written on 9th June, 1785 (now, in the London, *India Library Papers*) tells us that from his observations of them, he has found the Sikhs, "a haughty and high-spirited" people, who treat all foreigners "with great reserve and covert sort of disdain". A Sikh whom he met on a journey, when asked by him "respectfully, in whose service he was retained", gave the answer which George Forester conceived as "charac-

teristic of the disposition of the Sikh Nation."He said, in a tone of voice and with a countenance which glowed with and was keenly animated by the spirit of liberty and independence that he disclaimed an earthly master and that he was the servant of his Guru (that is God)."

Sikhs and Prosperity Go Together

Hari Ram Gupta, in his *Later Mughals* (Lahore, 1944), tell us that, in 1779, when Timur Shah sent his ambassador to the Sikhs at Multan asking them to vacate the province or take the displeasure of the Kabul emperor, "the Sikhs held a council and declared, 'here is an ambassador of the Shah, but our King is the true God. This man threatens us with Shah's displeasure. Death is his only punishment'."

The National Book Trust publication, *Traditions of the Indian Army* (1961), tells us that "The Sikh soldier wears the crown of immortality... you may scan in vain the pages of modern Indian History for heroism so remarkable, courage so reckless, and gallantry so unique."

And the story is not yet over. The little material that we have to reconstruct an Economic History of India and, particularly, its Northern region, from the beginning of the Christian era till the fifteenth century almost, it is a story of recurrent food shortages and cyclical famines severely controlling the population growth. During the sixth and the seventh centuries, for the first time in two thousand years, this region became almost self-sufficient in food production. In the 19th century it was a food exporting region and in the twentieth it fed the far flung outposts of the British Empire such as Australia and New Zealand. Before 1947, East Punjab was food deficit area, and from 1948 onwards it has been a food surplus area. Is there no nexus between the Sikhs and Sikhism and these economic developments?

Was it not Sikhism which declared agriculture as the most honest of professions, despite the tinge of *himsā* which certain Hindu thought-trends had attached to it? Was it not Sikhism which laid down, for the first time in the religious history of India, that one who would practise true religion, must earn his own livelihood through honest and creative means, without living on *bhikshā* and without the spivvry of middleman-ship? Was it not Sikhism which declared that he who would cherish

religious values and guard deposits of culture, must, at all times, keep ready to defend them by force of arms when necessary ? Was it not Sikhism which stipulated that the future, true heir to human civilisation, was not the genotype, a racial group, not the pheno-type, the votary of a language for the elect, not the behavior-type, the traditionalist, but the national type, one who believes and follows up values growingly manifested in the conscience of mankind? Did not Guru Gobind Singh say so, in so many words, for the first time in India and in the modern world ? Was it not Guru Gobind Singh who founded the Order of the Khalsa with these startling ideas in mind, about which Arnold Toynbee, in his *History* says that it is the true forerunner of the novel clan of Lenin's Communist Party ? Were it not the Sikh Gurus who conceded the right of women and lower castes to education and direct access to culture, for the first time in Hindu Society ? Was it not Guru Govind Singh who declared universal literacy as the necessary base for an enduring culture ? In 1690 he was in a position to proclaim : 'I have made all the Sikhs literate, including the old and the young; there is now left no one uneducated amongst my people'. As the Sikh historiographer Bhai Santokh Singh (1789-1845) tells us, "Sikhism aims at ensuring maximum amount of generosity, thoughtfulness, happiness, beauty, and humour and minimum measure of ambition, brutality, oppression, grief, bitterness and rancour.

It certainly is not the religion of the rustic, the uninformed for the wayward heretic as the flotsam town-Hindu sometimes likes to think it is and the Sikhs, though they might be a little too credulous and trusting *qua* the Hindus whom they instinctively regard as their own, and though they may be no match for their neighbours in diplomatic skill or other urban accomplishments, are by no means an under-developed human type or a people to be despised by the publicist and the politician.

The Choice before Hindu Society

Now that Hinduism and Hindu Society, as the repository of the political power, that is, the Republic of the Union of India, are hanging on with their finger tips to the edge of the plateau of modernity on to which they are trying to climb, they cannot afford to ignore, what Sikhism has to teach and to give. For, the choice is not between Hinduism and modernism, but between modernism and death. And the death is not less

mortal because it is to be imperceptibly gradual, or alienation that looks deceptively like transformation. The revival of the *Charvaka* is the alternative to conversion to Christianity or its inverted form, Marxism, and both mean death to Hinduism and its values. Historical rancour makes Islam, as a way out, out of question, as was realised by intelligent Hindus long ago. The author, Ganesh Das Badhera of Chahar Gulshan (circa 1821) tells the story of a rich cultured Hindu of Kshatriya caste of Lahore, who, on hearing that his son was contemplating conversion to Islam on ideological and temperamental grounds, addressed him thus:

If you want to give up Hinduism because you consider Islam more profitable from worldly point of view, then fie on you. I would rather that you commit suicide. But if you thirst for freer and ampler credo that does not restrict and yet preserves your Hindu integrity, then I urge you to become a Sikh.

Let there be a new and fresh re-orientation of attitudes towards the Sikhs and a reappraisal of Sikhism by those who wish to preserve enduring glory of Hindu race and Hindu values of life. Let this re-orientation and reappraisal be freed from the shackles of ignorance and prejudice of a Tagore and a Gandhi.

SIKHISM AND ISLAM

Every now and then claims and counter-claims are made about Guru Nanak professing Hinduism or Islam. Vishva Hindu Parishad is the protagonist of the first proposition; the Ahmadiya Sect of Muslims advance the second theory. For enlightenment of our readers, we reprint the late Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh's response to an enquiry from the Hājī of Mosul (Iraq) first published in the Missionary: Jan-March 1963. —Editors, The Sikh Review.

Q. "I have heard it said that (Hazrat) Baba Nanak was a true Moslem believer, or, at least he was a great admirer of the Holy Prophet of Islam and a staunch supporter of the Koranic Revelation. I request for authoritative comments from some eminent Sikh theologian and scholar on this matter."

A. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in the 15th Century in the North of India that had already been politically integrated to the organised world of Islam for almost 500 years. Arabic was already the official and cultural language at Lahore, a place only a few miles from the birth-place of the Sikh Prophet. Islam and its culture, was not only the dominant strain of the world civilization and culture of those days, but had also percolated into the common idioms and modes of thought of the North-Western Punjab. It was in this milieu that the oecumenical religion of Sikhism took birth. Guru Nanak not only was in intimate contact with the Moslem learned men and centres of religion of Islam of those days, but he also made a close study of the basic Islamic literature. His knowledge of the fundamental Hindu sacred texts now being revealed through a critical study of the Sikh Scripture, is not only pleasantly surprising but it also impresses. Needless to say that Guru Nanak was thoroughly conversant with the texts and the teachings of the Koran. Since Guru Nanak was a Prophet in his own right and according to his own claim, he neither gives direct quotation nor makes precise references to Hindu and Muslim texts, as a mere scholar would be expected to make,

and it is, therefore, only a trained scholar of Comparative Religion who can spot out and pin-point the exact sacred texts which Guru Nanak had in mind when delivering a particular Revelation.

When such a critical study of the Revelations of Guru Nanak is made, there is left no doubt in the mind of a balanced scholar that even when apparently affirming or repudiating a particular doctrine or text, the Guru almost always amplifies his own statement by added nuances of critical exposition. An appraisal of this character alone can make it clear that Guru Nanak had a definite and positive attitude towards the *Ḳoran*.

The *Ḳoran* has three distinct elements in its texts : (a) Dissertations on the nature of God and man's relation to Him, (b) pronouncements on Social organisation and ethics, (c) statements on Judaic mythology. Guru Nanak ignores the last as irrelevant to the message that he has to preach to the mankind. He also considers this as uninteresting, for, he makes very sparse, if at all, even passing references to it. With regard to the second element in the *Ḳoran*, namely, the laws and principles of social organisation and social ethics, Guru Nanak would seem to reject most of them as contingent and non-perennial. It is the first element in the *Ḳoran* which the Guru takes seriously and on which he has made a large number of pronouncements. The space and scope of this answer forbids any detailed discussion of this point and I would, therefore, just state that Guru Nanak seems to find most of it as worthy of consideration and even assent and he has explicitly incorporated its essentials in the Sacred Book of the Sikhs, the *Guru Granth*, though only after a personal digestion and re-interpretation.

I must make this statement slightly clearer.

In sura 2, called *Albaqr*, the Cow, for instance, amid brief disquisitions on a multitude of subjects, including pilgrimages, divorce, menstruation, the rights of women, proposals of marriage, and the need for killing the adversaries of Islam, there appears, quite unexpectedly, one of the grandest verses of the *Ḳoran* the famous throne-verse.

There is no God save Him, the living the eternal;
Slumber overtaketh Him not, nor doth sleep weary Him.
Unto Him belongeth all things in Heaven and on the earth.

Who shall intercede with Him save by His will.
 His throne is as vast the Heavens and the earth.
 And the keep of them wearie th Him not.
 He is exalted, the mighty One.

It is this beautiful and noble text which claims the attention and general assent of Guru Nanak and it is this text which he has matched by his own famous text, the *Sodar*, that Gate, or The Gate, as there being no definite article in the Indo-Sanskrit languages, it can only be expressed as that,

"Like what is that Gate ?
 With what compares that Abode ?
 By visiting where He sustains All ?

Then in this text Guru Nanak goes to imply that the formal nature of this 'Throne' is best comprehensible by human mind through reference to those areas of Reality that pertain to sound and feeling rather than those that pertain to visual and spatial aspects of Reality, as is implicated by the Koranic text. Herein Guru Nanak has the advantage of his acquaintance with the categories of the Samkhya school of Hindu Philosophy that categorises sound as the subject element of sensibilia and perception. It is only by a careful and critical analysis of such parallel texts in the Koran and the Guru Granth, that the true interrelationship between Islam and Sikhism can be properly understood.

Another grand verse, sura 24 in the Koran goes under the name of *mishkātul-anwār*. The tabernacle. This is the text to which the Mohamedan mystics and Sufis have returned again and again, never tiring of the mysterious Lamp whose rays bathe the whole universe :

God is the Light of the heavens and earth.
 The similitude of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp.
 And the lamp is within a glass.
 And the glass, as it were a pearly star.
 This lamp is lit from a blessed tree.
 An olive neither of the east nor of the west;
 Almost this oil would shine though no

fire touched it.
 Light upon Light, God guideth whom
 He will to His Light,
 And He speaketh in parables to men,
 for He knoweth all things.

Now, Guru Nanak has taken an unmistakable note of this text. Guru Nanak was also familiar with certain Hindu sacred texts (*Vaikunth*, and *Dipaparijvalanam* in the *Guradudapauranam*) that speak of the Lamp that guides men here and hereafter, Guru Nanak has revealed a text which not only takes note of all these Moslem and Hindu sacred texts but which constitutes the Guru's own disquisition on the Lamp that guides. Guru Nanak opens by declaring :

"My Light is the Name of One and only God.
 And its oil is the pain and suffering :
 The former is consumed and the latter is then done away with.
 And, lo ! there is no-doing between I and Death."

A large number of similar texts in the Guru Granth, are, in this manner, grounded in the Islamic and Hindu sacred texts but invariably the former have the content and identity of their own.

This is true and correct relationship between Islam and Sikhism. As for Guru Nanak's attitude towards the Muslim Prophet Mohammed, it has to be a matter of inference, for, nowhere in the voluminous Guru Granth, the name of the Moslem Prophet occurs, directly or indirectly, though *Koran* is mentioned by name more than once. The Sikh doctrine on the subject is sharp and clear; the born is perishable, and all praise is due to the Timeless. In so far as the Guru perceived excellence in Mohammed, he attributed it exclusively to the grace of God, and whatever was contingent, unenduring in the words and deeds of Mohammed, he deemed as merely human and impermanent trait.

There is no other way of answering the question put by the learned Quadi from Mosul .

Courtesy : The Sikh Review, March 1991.

SIKHISM AND THE WORLD SOCIETY

On the 3rd Nov., 74, the author arrived at Toronto to attend to certain engagements when he learnt that in the Oecumenical Institute of the University a world-gathering of representatives of all the world religions was scheduled to meet on the 5th November, to consider as to how best all the world-religions can mutually cooperate to help solve the most urgent current problems of mankind, of peace and war, hunger, and emergence of a world society, that is God-oriented.

The author learnt that no Sikh had been invited, although preparations for this gathering had been afoot for the whole of the past year.

On his enquiries he was informed that "Sikhism" was not accepted as an autonomous or a world-religion and the representatives of Hinduism, therefore, were deemed as sufficiently qualified to refer to Sikhism, if necessary, during these momentous discussions.

As Sirdar Sahib expressed a wish to participate in these deliberations, as a Sikh spokesman, he was shown the courtesy of being formally invited.

The gathering was about 50/60 strong representing Hinduism, Buddhism (*Hinayan, Mahayan, Tantrayana*, Tibetan Buddhism and modern Western Buddhism) from India, Ceylon, Tibet, Korea, North Vietnam and Bhutan, and Islam was represented by Sunni Shia, *Ahmadi* and *Ismaili* sects of Islam. Almost all sects of Christianity were well-represented, as was Judaism.

On the following Note being considered, it was deemed of sufficient importance to claim most of the time of the deliberations and in conclusion there was reached a consensus that Sikhism as the most recent and modern world-religion was entitled to special attention in relation to the problems that had engaged the minds of the delegates.* I may say that There are,

*This note which seems to have later on given rise to the book *Sikhism for Modern Man* is reproduced below with the courtesy of The *Sikh Review* Editors.

broadly speaking five categories of religions from the point of view of outlook and institutional action, that is, their scope of prevailment.

(1) Religions that are ethnic, grounded in the conviction that entitlement to and direct benefits of the, or their, religion are divinely and irrevocably reserved for a particular ethnic tribe constituting the God ordained elites of Religion, "the Chosen people." in special covenant with God. Judaism is the well-known instance of this category of religions.

(2) Those who claim that entitlement to and direct benefits of their religion are freely open to the Jew and the Gentile, that is, all the people of the world if and only if they accept the religion in question and its verbal formulations as the exclusive repository of Truth. The oecumenical religions of Christianity and Islam belong to this category.

(3) Religion that insists that since penultimate and highest religious experience is essentially obtainable as the end-result of a long series of births and re-births of a soul within the context of a particular geographic and cultural milieu through the process of metempsychosis, the path and benefits of the true religion are accessible exclusively to a genetic racial group confined to a specified geographic habitat. By understanding thus alone can the Hindu claim that "it is an exclusive privilege and grace of God that enables man to be born a Hindu in the sacred land called, Bharat, that is, India; a birth in other lands, no matter of how excellent a condition and however frequently, is no better than a repetitious frustration and wearisome waste."¹ The basic postulate of this doctrine is that the multitudinous personal experiences of the present as well as the characteristics of the body holding the experiencing self are the expression of the past acts in some residual and seminal form by a transmigrating entity or principle. A Hindu would explain that the fundamental convictions of the votaries of religions (1) and (2) arise out of prolonged and laborious studies of obscure phenomenon and mysterious human faculties, that can be understood properly only if the aforementioned basic postulate of Hinduism is conceded and accepted which provides the rationale of Hindu claim regarding birth in a genetic Hindu family in India.

(4) Religions that postulate that the fact of religious experience being

Kṛsnānugrahaṭo labhādawā mānave janam bhāṛte, anyasthāne brthā janam
niṣpphlanṇa gatāgatam.

--Vishnupurāṇa

non-intellectual and non-cognitive, it implicates that operative level of the religion must be the *upāya*, the provisional means, and not doctrines and concepts, beliefs and dogmas and these *upāya* have to be as variable as the beings whose spiritual foods they are meant to supply. Buddhism, as the export-form of Hinduism, is a religion of this category with its numerous expressions ranging from *Hīnayāna*,—the original ethico-philosophical religion—to *Mahāyāna*, *Vajrayāna*, *Tantrayāna*, *Mantrayāna*, *Tibetan Buddhism* and *Zen*, to mention only the major manifestations of Buddhism.

(5) The Religion that aims at transcending all particularism in religion and points towards a religious experience realized as the All-Ground of all particular religious experiences and which, therefore, does not confront dogma with dogma and belief with belief and which does not aim at religious conversion so much as authentic religious life and is thus primarily a bridgemaker and not a universal conqueror or all leveller, such as oecumenical religions like Islam and Christianity tend to be. Sikhism, being a religion of this category does not outrightly reject or oppose other doctrines or dogmas but demands true dialogue rather than conversion as the goal transcending particularisms of other religions, as it preaches that beyond lies, not a universal concept, not synthesis or syncretic amalgam but deeper penetration of one's own religion in thought, devotion and action. It upholds that :

(i) in the depth of every religion—living religion—there is a point at which religion itself is its importance, and that to which point it breaks through its particularity elevating it to spiritual freedom and with it a vision of the spiritual presence in its expressions of the ultimate meanings of existence.

(ii) The religions of the category (1) are of elitic exclusivity engrossed in and preoccupied with the maintenance and preservation of their identity and their status of a spiritual *privilegentia* through political and social viability.

(iii) The religions of category (2) in the case of Christianity, believing that, the nature of things is divine love for the created world aim at a will to create through suffering and a movement of such wills that is expected to lead to establishment of a new "Kingdom" and state of affairs in human history in which God's Will is "done on earth as it is in Heaven."

(iv) The other variety of category 2 of which Islam is an expression par-excellence, aims at and strives for *al-jihād*, a universal or dominant monolithic, closed Muslim world-society in which the laws of personal conduct and social organisation revealed unambiguously and finally by God through Prophet Mohammed are obeyed and enforced—this being the ultimate purpose of God in creating the world and the man—and which Muslim society is to be enlarged and strengthened progressively through the policy of "enforcement of Islamic laws through the sword," *as-shara tahat-us-saif*.

(v) The category (3) religions are insular, self-sufficient and self-enclosed, concerned only with ensuring external noninterference and their internal purity.

(vi) The religions of category (4) are a-social, catholic and concerned exclusively with awakening in the individual—in his personal capacity and not in his position as a limb of the society—transcendental consciousness, *prajna*, the wisdom that liberates from the limitations of all names and forms.

(vii) The religions of the category (5) that is Sikhism, freely recognizes that search for a fundamental unity of religions or the attempts at the religious rapprochement have their limitations, for, there are fundamental differences in the conceptions of Reality and attitudes towards the world, permanently impending a real and lasting synthesis between basically incompatible elements, preaches frank and unreserved dialogue between various, so as to arrive at the experience that transcends religious particularism and realizes a base of identity underneath all modes of religious expression. As a corollary thereof Sikhism favours a plural, free, open and progressive human society, God oriented, non-aggressive but firm and everready to combat rise and growth of evil, through organized resistance, and forward looking yet non-ambitious. For facilitating emergence of this state of affairs it has conceived of and recommends organized and co-operative efforts of men of good will, indicating the true sources of dynamism available to man for this purpose, the details of which, however, are outside the scope of this short Note.

WAR AND SIKHISM

It is generally asserted that the first five Sikh Gurus, up to Guru Arjan (1563-1606), were opposed to individual participation in war, and to war as a measure of national policy, and that it was the persecution of Guru Arjan by the Mughal Emperor Jehangir which obliged the Sikh movement to diverge from its true doctrine of pacifism.

Mistaken Impression

Arnold Toynbee in his *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, (Oxford, 1956), at page 110, says that Sikhism fell from its religious height into a political trough, because the Sikh Gurus, Har Gobind and Govind Singh . . . succumbed to the temptation to use force. He further adds that this 'downfall' of Sikhism was used by a clever militant Hindu reaction against the Mughal Empire, as its instrument. (pp. 112-113, *ibid.*)

Both these impressions are as mistaken as they are generally current, even amongst the Sikhs themselves.

To appreciate this mistake it is necessary to understand the real Sikh doctrine on the use of force in human life, the doctrine of pacifism of Mahatma Gandhi and its apparent roots, the Hindu doctrine of *ahimsa*, and the present-day political trend that the war should be renounced by the nations of the world, as well as the true Hindu doctrine on non-violence.

These four trends of thought are broadbased on basically different notions and they must not be confused with each other if the Sikh position is to be properly appreciated.

Gandhian Argument

The Gandhian argument against war is that it is an embodiment of violence, *hiṃsā*, and *hiṃsā* being *per se* evil and morally wrong, the war is permissible under no circumstances, whatever, on moral and religious grounds. According to this doctrine, if the choice is between annihilation and war, of war the perpetuation of another moral wrong, it is the

alternative other than the war which must be preferred, war being the greatest evil of all.

Gita's Version

In the *Bhagvad Gita*, the cream of Hindu thought, war appears not as a means but as an end in itself, the pride, duty and glory of the *kṣatriya* caste. In fact, any gain sought through war is thought to vitiate its merit; the soldier is not to concern himself with the result of the battle, but only how he conducts himself in the battle. This became the Rajput ideal in the centuries to come against which the utilitarian Aurangzeb fretted and declared that 'the Hindus are worse than worthless as soldiers, because with the obstinacy of the mules they refuse to acquiesce in a strategic retreat'. It was this view of the matter, the Hindu doctrine of the final and once-for-all pitched battle, which cost the Hindus their disastrous defeats, one after the other from the 11th century to the 15th century, in the battlefields of Lamghan in Central Asia, and in the plains of the Northern India. It was only in the 18th century, when the *sudra* but shrewd Marathas abandoned this high and mighty *kṣatriya* ideal, that the Hindu honour was retrieved in the battlefield.

In the earthy *Arthaśāstra*, war is mentioned as the last resort of a state, after the other means of diplomacy, perfidy, and threats (*sām, dām* (*sam, dam, bheda*) have failed. War here is essentially a means to an end, the prestige, power, stability of the state. The whole basis of this approach to the problem is essentially amoral, that is, all moral considerations are deemed as simply irrelevant.

Present Day Argument Against War

These two doctrines, the Gandhian and the truly Hindu, on war, must be contra-distinguished from the present day world trend of pacifist thought. The present-day argument against war is that continued tension and a series of crises will sooner or later produce war, that all wars are now likely to turn into nuclear wars, and that nuclear wars being mutually destructive, to the point of annihilation, cannot be safely considered as instruments of national policy. An implicit postulate of this argument is that surrender is preferable to annihilation, despite any moral issues that may underlie the threatened conflict.

The Sikh Doctrine

The Sikh doctrine on war is different from all these three approaches towards the problem. Firstly, Sikhism declares that war is a perfectly legitimate and permissible activity, both, as a measure of national policy and as an individual activity expressing itself in the use of force and employment of violence.

Force and violence are not *per se* evil. Guru Gobind Singh in his second epistle, the *Zafarnamah*, made it plain that :

chūn kar az hameh hīlte darguzasht, halāl ast burdan b-shmshīr dast

Secondly, war and use of force are to be deemed as means and not ends in themselves. This dictum of Guru Gobind Singh, that 'the hand may legitimately move to the hilt of the sword, only when all other peaceful means have failed', clearly implicates this second point of distinction of the Sikh doctrine.

Thirdly, Sikhism discountenances the idea that war and violence are to be avoided at all costs and that even annihilation and surrender are preferable irrespective of the moral issues involved. Guru Nanak himself has declared that it is the privilege and right of the true man to fight for, and die in the cause of righteousness' : *marnā munsā sūrīān hakk hai, jehoe marn parvāno*.

The Sikh position and the Sikh doctrine, therefore, must not be confused, either with the Gandhian thought, or the *Kṣatriya* ideal, Christian pacifism, or the present day no-war mental trend.

The Sikh Way of life is a distinct, independent, and self-sufficient religion in its own right.

Courtesy : *The Sikh Review*, August 1960.

A BLUE PRINT FOR PREACHING SIKHISM

Background

More than a year ago¹ the General Secretary of the outgone Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar, confided to the writer of these lines that they had earmarked a sum of rupees two hundred thousand to be formed into a nucleus of a reserve fund, to be continuously augmented in the coming years, for the purpose of placing the task of preaching Sikhism on a permanent and long term organised basis. For this purpose, he asked me to prepare and suggest a bare outline for the consideration of the statutory Dharma Prachar Committee of the S.G.P.C.

It was subsequently suggested that instead of preparing a formal scheme, the writer should give a talk to a selected panel who should then report the purport of the same to the authorities of the S.G.P.C. for their reactions.

Accordingly, a meeting was held between the writer, Amar Singh Dosanjh, the General Secretary of the S.G.P.C., and Professor Harbhajan Singh, Additional Secretary (Trusts) of the S.G.P.C. at Jullundur on 28th March, 1959, where the writer gave a talk lasting over three hours explaining his views on the subject. The talk was listened to attentively, but at the end it was felt that the points made by the writer should be reduced to writing by himself, to facilitate the task of the other members of the meeting and thus the following notes were written down and duly sent to the S.G.P.C. for their consideration, soon after.

It seems, however, that these ideas did not find favour with the then authorities of the S.G.P.C. and, consequently, the whole or almost the whole of the aforementioned earmarked amount was expended on payments to the ballad-singers, the *q̣hādīs* during the last election campaign of a few months ago, in accordance with a formally adopted

1. This refers to the year A.D, 1959.

resolution of the Dharma Prachar Committee of the S.G.P.C.

In the March, 1960 issue of the *The Sikh Review* there appeared indications that the idea of organising the propagation of Sikhism by an agency other than the S.G.P.C. is taking roots, and the brief notes prepared in March, 1959, therefore, are reproduced below for publication in *The Sikh Review*, for whatever they are worth.

The following main points were made by the writer in the aforementioned talk which, if necessary, can be elaborated further.

1. Causes of Revulsion from Religion

Revulsion from 'Religion', during the past 250 years or so, has been a world-wide phenomenon. It sprouted in the West and has spread all over the world. The reasons of its origin in the West were different from those of its spread in the East. In the West the reasons were moral and intellectual, while in the East, they were political and psychological. The conflict of the papacy with Fredrick II and his successors, and the religious wars of intoleration, exposed organized religion as a naked instrument of worldly power cynically divorced from its outward professions of spirituality, and this caused a revulsion in the minds of the sensitive and intelligent Christian minority against 'Religion' as such, for Christianity was the only form of valid religion they had believed in for a thousand years, from Constantine onwards.

It was the same kind of moral revulsion which the present internecine group-feuds in the S.G.P.C. evoke in the minds of the impartial and sensitive Sikhs. This revulsion in Europe was reinforced and intensified by certain advances in the realms of natural sciences, such as astronomy and biology, which showed that the earth was not the centre of the universe, and that God did not create the universe in seven days, as stated in the Book of *Genesis*. From this, the energetic and sensitive minds of Europe concluded that neither was Religion ultimately true, nor a good thing to have as the main concern of serious minds on this earth. This conclusion led to two far-reaching consequences :

(i) The enormous mental energy of the men of intellect of the West was diverted towards a vigorous study of the natural sciences with the result that they acquired a vast knowledge of the laws of nature, which put into their hands tremendous powers of betterment and control. Thus,

they succeeded in changing their own social conditions, and they also managed to subjugate the whole of Asia to the chariot wheels of their own material progress.

(ii) Their notions of the purpose of human activity on earth were also radically transformed in this context, and they argued that since the Christian ideal of the Kingdom of Heaven was shown as chimerical, an era of material prosperity on the earth is the only proper substitute as the goal of human activity. Vast advances in technology seem to make this goal eminently practicable, and thus further pursuit of advancement in technology was tacitly agreed upon as the most desirable activity to pursue.

The theory of Communism and its practices derive their inception and validity from these premises. Likewise, the theories of Socialism, now tacitly accepted throughout the world, as in our own country, as the only acceptable political philosophy of our times, also spring from these premises.

The causes of revulsion from Religion, in the East, during the last one hundred years and more, have been political, primarily. A politically subjugated East became dissatisfied with Religion, as the main concern of life on this earth, because Religion gave them no hope of freedom from political slavery and economic subservience.

There must be a little something extra in the European outlook which gave them such power over the East, so the Eastern mind argued. This led to copying the West, in the matter of religion first, and then in science, technology, organization and distribution of political and military power, till they discovered that until the East went the whole hog in adopting western ways and outlook, it could not succeed by part-copying. Revulsion from Religion being the necessary base and ingredient of the western outlook, it was adopted uncritically by the intelligent minds of the East as well.

2. Reaction

During the last two or three decades, there is perceptible to keen minds, a distinct reaction in the world from that which acknowledges the natural sciences as the ultimate form of knowledge of Reality, and technology as the unmixed blessing for mankind, and the material Welfare

State as the only practicable ideal to pursue, such as is implicit in the Communistic and Socialistic ideals of polity. This reaction is definite and powerful, though it is likely that another fifty years will pass before it assumes concrete forms on the social and political levels. It has been set up by three causes in the main :

(a) The immense advances that have been made in the fields of natural sciences have revealed that a true and satisfying comprehension of the phenomena and the facts that these sciences study, is not possible either through the methods of experiment peculiar to the natural sciences or on the basis of their fundamental premise that the true nature of Reality is essentially that which is revealed to man through his motor-sensori perceptions. This is a fatal blow to every kind of theory that accepts materialism as its base, whether these theories are philosophical or political. It is, therefore, certain that though in the days to come, the communists and their lineal descendants, the Socialist, may by seizing and monopolizing political power, succeed in undermining or destroying the existing patterns of 'religion' and culture, they cannot eventually succeed in either destroying and enduring society on their own terms .

(b) The recent advancements in technology, such as nuclear fission, have violently disillusioned keen and sensitive minds in the world out of the belief and faith that the god of technology is a beneficent and compassionate god. Its *Chandika* form, capable of universal destruction and *pralaya* stands now fully exposed to the gaze, and men have started thinking feverishly as to how best to avert this impending universal disaster, either by adopting values that can control this demon effectively, or by beating a hasty retreat from this kind of scientific activity altogether.

(c) In the realm of purely philosophical speculations also, a dead-end seems to have been reached, and it is now being increasingly realized that mere analytical thought, linguistics, cannot replace genuine intuition and speculative insight for comprehending the nature of true Reality.

All these dead-ends, in the physical sciences, in applied sciences and in pure speculation, have set up a mental reaction, which is bound, in the decades to come, to arouse a genuine and powerful interest in Religion and its paramount necessity to mankind.

3. Alternatives for Sikhism

Sikhism must either rise up as a true and genuine answer to this situation which the mankind faces in the year 1960, or it will perish. There is no third alternative.

4. Oecumenical Religion

Only an oecumenical religion can furnish such an answer and such as would be acceptable to mankind in the context explained above. An oecumenical religion is that which (a) is for the whole of mankind and not for a particular epoch, race, or geographical locale, that is, which is not temporal, parochial or national, (b) which is not history-grounded, that, its validity is not dependant upon its epiphany in history, or historical events; and (c) which is not contingent, that is, shown as having been founded or having emerged merely to meet or satisfy a particular demand or situation in the historical past.

5. Capability of Sikhism

Sikhism is capable of being interpreted as such a religion and if it costs the money and fortunes of all the gurdwaras and the individual Sikhs to achieve this end, it is worth it.

6. The Essential Need

The problem of propagation of the Sikh religion must be directly and immediately correlated to this universal and abiding context, and it must be freed from the apron-strings of party and faction, obscurantism and petty vested interests, now and at once, if dire consequences are to be avoided.

7. The Purpose

This problem is two-fold : (1) to make Sikhism as the all-India religion, and (2) thus, and also simultaneously, to set up its claim as the future World Religion.

8. The Methods

The methods to pursue these two aims may coalesce, but mostly shall have to be taken up on two different levels, domestic and international.

9. Domestic Level

The problem of domestic level propagation subdivides itself into two distinct problems : (1) That of agency, (2) That of technique. The Sikh Gurus are unique in this that they not only founded a religion but also

devised and near-perfected a technique for its development and propagation. The special agency for the propagation of Sikhism, in the historical past, has consisted of itinerant, wholetime celibate preachers, such as the *udāsīs* and the *nirmalās*, but at no time was it recognized, in theory or practice, that it was their exclusive prerogative. Any Sikh householder, in whom the sense of religion is keenly awakened and who is thus in a position to influence the minds of those come in contact with him, has always been deemed as authorized to preach Sikhism, for, Sikhism does not recognize an ordained priestly class.

During the struggle for democratic control over the management of *gurdwārās*, during the thirties of this century, we alienated them, and have almost eliminated them from the field of propagation of Sikhism, and this is by far one of the greatest tragedies that Sikhism has encountered during the last two hundred years. Paid secular *prachāraks*, that is, preachers, under the direct control of the democratically elected S.G.P.C. can never effectively replace this agency which has the approval and blessings of the Gurus.

With regard to the question of technique also, the Sikh Gurus have the unique distinction of abandoning the age-old and exclusive technique of religious propaganda. *Prachār* known to Indian tradition as *Śāstrārtha*, the game of intellectual disputation with the object of achieving verbal victory over the representative opponent or heretic. The Gurus, instead, adopted the non-controversial technique of appealing to the whole nature of the individual concerned, his intellect as well as his heart, not through words alone, but also and primarily, through example and true living. Guru Nanak himself taught this technique to Bhai Sajjan of Tulamba (modern Pakpattan), and to Bhai Lalo of Eminabad. For this there is no precedent in the long Indian tradition unless you go back to the days of primitive Buddhism. This method of approach, which proved successful during the times of the Gurus, can be ignored by us only at our own peril.

This is one item of the technique for propagation of Sikhism which we should now try to adopt and perfect. The other is the physical means of mass contact. The Sikh Gurus harnessed music to their own purpose and as an ancillary to oral preaching. This technique was so well perfected by them that the Sikhs are still the masters of the stage and there are no

people in India or abroad who can surpass them in this form of propagation of their ideas.

But since the times of the Gurus, various other methods for propagation of ideas have been invented and developed, both visual and auditory. In taking to them the Sikhs have made no marked progress, and this is the greatest weakness from which the cause of Sikhism suffers today. These new methods consist of, (a) the printed word, (b) the amplified spoken word, such as through radio propagation, and (c) the visualized idea, such as cinematography and television.

The Radio, is, at present, a State monopoly in India, but the Sikhs should strive hard to win some concessions of autonomous control over this technique, for instance, licence to put on the air the musical divine services in the Golden Temple at Amritsar.

Television has yet to take roots in this country, but the Sikhs should keep an open eye on its vast possibilities as a means of putting across the vital ideas, and should leave no stone unturned to achieve some kind of limited autonomy over its operations, for religious purposes.

The remaining two fields are freely open to the Sikhs for exploitation, the printed word and the cinemascope. We have woefully lagged behind others in adopting ourselves to these, and though we have suffered much in the past for not mastering the press and the printed word, we are likely to suffer much more if we do not immediately take full advantage of the cinemascope for putting across our religion to the masses and the outside world. It is a question of adapt and excel or perish.

The immediate conversion of the S.G.P.C. monthly Punjabi publication, *Gurmat Prakash*, into a first class, quarterly prestige magazine in Panjabi, of a forum of religious ideas, and subvention of The *Sikh Review* of Calcutta to enable it to become a first class English magazine on Sikh religion, immediately suggest themselves as two urgent ideas in this connexion.

10. International level

In the international field the best we can do at the moment is to produce such literature, in the international language of English, as would interpret Sikhism as an oecumenical religion. We may also subsidize or

set up small Sikh missions in the America , Canada, and Malaya to begin with, where there already exist permanent Sikh settlements.

These are the ten points which the writer of these lines made before the two representatives of the S.G.P.C. on 28th March, 1959, for their earnest consideration, and these points were amplified and explained with a great deal of illustrative material.

(Courtesy : The *Sikh Review*, May 1960. The ideas propounded in this article stand elaborated further in Sirdar Kapur Singh's book *Sikhism For the Modern Man*, published by Guru Nanak Dev University in 1993 - editors.

SIKHS AND COMMUNISM

The early infiltration of communism amongst Sikhs and the emotional liveliness with which it has been cherished amongst many of them has aroused curiosity in the minds of intelligent observers of this phenomenon of contemporary India. Some think, it is wholly fortuitous, whereas others believe that there is a casual nexus between it and the original Sikh impulse. A large number of Sikh communists believe that Communism is nothing but an exegesis and an extension of the Sikh doctrine, though the better informed amongst them cannot have failed to notice the deep chasm that divides the basic postulates and metaphysical doctrines of Sikhism, and the fundamental dogmas of Communism as a social and a quasi-religious theory. Be that as it may, a free discussion and dispassionate thinking on the subject is desirable.

When in 1950, in the course of a discussion on Sikhism with an intelligent Hindu friend at Simla, I remarked to him that the order of the Khalsa was the real prototype of the All Russia Communist Party of Lenin and further suggested that this might be the real cause and explanation of the fascination which the Comintern has exerted over a section of the restless Sikhs, my Hindu friend reacted unfavourably towards this theory and considered it similar to a certain other contemporary intellectual movement of the Punjab which postulates that all the modern scientific theories and discoveries, so far made and yet to be made, are adnumberated in the Vedas as interpreted by these gentlemen.

Toynbee's Endorsement

It was almost seven years later at the end of 1957 that this Hindu friend came across a certain passage, in an abridged publication of the monumental *A Study of History* by Arnold Toynbee, which runs as follows :

The intensity of an alien intelligentsia's hatred of the western middle class gave the measure of its foreboding of its inability to emulate Western middle class achievement. The classic instance, up-to-date in which this embittering prescience had been justified, was the

Russian intelligentsia's catastrophic failure, after the first two Russian Revolutions in 1917, to carry out its fantastic mandate to transform the wreck of Patrine Czardom into a parliamentary constitutional state in the 19th century Western style. The Kerensky regime was a fiasco because it was saddled with the task of making bricks with straw; of making a parliamentary government, without a solid, competent, prosperous and experienced middle class to draw upon. By contrast, Lenin succeeded because he set himself to create something which could meet situation. His All Union communist Party was not, indeed, a thing entirely without precedent. In Islamic Muslim History it had been anticipated in the slave house-hold of the Ottoman Padishah, in the Qyslbash fraternity of devotees of Safawis, and in the Sikh Khalsa that had been called into being by a decision to fight the Mughal ascendancy with its own weapons. In these Islamic and Hindu fraternities ethos of Russian Communist Party is already unmistakably discernible. Lenin's claim to originality rests on his having reinstated this formidable potential instrument for himself and on his priority in applying it to a special purpose of enabling a non-western society to hold its own against the modern West by mastering the latest devices of western technology while at the same time eschewing the West's current orthodox ideology.

Three Questions

Let us examine three questions, the same which the Hindu friend, referred to earlier, posed after seeing this confirmation by a European scholar, of my contention and which confirmation alone, in the eyes of this friend, conferred respectability on it. These three questions are :

1. Were these islamic fraternities imbued with and grounded in the same ethos as the Order of the Khalsa ?
2. Has the Order of the Khalsa common characteristics with the All- Russia Communist Party ?
3. Is Communism consistent with Sikhism ?

Ottoman Slave Household's Selfish Motive

The slave household of the Ottoman Padishah entertained sentiments of firm loyalty to the ruling Turkish family for considerations

that were purely mundane and grounded in immediate self-interest. The worldly interests of each and every member of this slave household were so inalienably and inextricably bound up with the existence and continuation in power of the dynasty of the Ottoman Padishah that the former could not exist without the latter, and in being loyal to the royal to themselves. Their loyalty thus had no other ideal than their own mundane interests. It clearly had no reference to anything beyond their own moderately enlightened self-interest. This type of loyalty is not rare even in the animal kingdom, and it is the general mode of social behaviour of all sane human beings. It is not infused with any self-abanegating idealism and to consider it as a prototype of the All Russia Communist Party is thoroughly mistaken.

Qyslbash Loyalty grounded in Gratitude

The Qyslbash fraternity stands on a somewhat different footing, however. Their loyalty to the Safawi dynasty originated in gratitude and was sustained by religious and national patriotism. Sheikh Saif-ud-Din Ishak was a lineal descendant of Musa, the seventh Imam, and forefather of the famous and fabulous Aga Khan. He was a pious Safi residing at Ardebil, south-west of the Caspian, in the fourteenth Century. Timur known to European as Temerlane (Timur-i-Ling, 1335-1405) was so impressed by the stories of the Sheikh's piety that he sought him at his abode, and was so charmed by the visit that, as a consequence of the Sheikh's intercession, he released from captivity a large number of prisoners of Turkish Georgian origin, taken in wars with Beyazid. This ensured to the Sheikh constant devotion and gratitude of these men, and this sentiment of loyalty was maintained by their descendants for the members of the Sheikh family in successive generations. Junaid the great grandson of the Sheikh, married a sister of Uzan Hasan of royal family and the youngest son of this marriage, Ismail, born in 1480, was the Safi who founded Safawi dynasty by his assumption of royalty in 1499. Shah Abbas the Great was the greatest king of this dynasty and he was a contemporary of our Akbar, the Great. He came to throne in 1587, and Sir Anthony Sherlay, an English soldier of fortune in his service wrote of him : "His furniture of mind is infinitely royal, wise valiant, liberal, temperate, merciful and an exceeding lover of justice. In 1598 he made his capital at Isfahan, where on a plateau over 5300 feet above sea-level

a superb city grew up which early in the 17th century had a population of over 600,000 where from the Iranian saying : *Isfahan nisf-e-Jahan*, Isfahan is half the world." This dynasty ended in 1736 with the accession of Nadir as the Shah of Persia, who made his acquaintance with the Sikhs after his sack of Delhi and the loot of Peacock Throne and who correctly prophesied that, "*az dahan-i-shan bu-l-shahanshahi mi ayad*,"¹ that is, 'the Sikhs are clearly destined for being the masters of India.'

The Qyslbash fraternity, throughout, remained loyal to Safawi rulers and they made every sacrifice possible to sustain them in power. The Safawis were rightly regarded as the national monarchs, not only in respect of origin and birth, but in essence and spirit also, and it is, therefore, legitimate to assume that the loyalty of the Qyslbash was based upon national sentiment as well as communal gratitude. This is the basic characteristic of ethos of the Qyslbash loyalty to the Safawis. This loyalty was essentially personal, and secondarily national, and the idealism which sustained it consisted of communal gratitude and national pride. This is the ethos, with its basic component of gratitude and patriotism.

Origin of the Khalsa Misunderstood

The Order of the Khalsa has no contingent origin as it is sometimes believed. This basic misunderstanding about the nature and aims of the Khalsa has not only misled scholars of the calibre of Toynbee, but has also vitiated the Sikh historical impulse as well as the operative attitudes of other Indians towards the Sikhs. For want of proper analysis and non-availability of meagre original documents to the scholars on Sikhism, there has been created and perpetuated the wholly false impression that Guru Gobind Singh inaugurated the Order of the Khalsa to meet some historical contingency such as fighting the Mughal rulers, and the real truth to stress which Guru Gobind Singh himself took such pains in his writings and exhortations, is thus almost forgotten even by the generality of the Sikhs themselves.

Guru Gobind Singh made it abundantly clear that the Order of the Khalsa had been founded to achieve a Divine Aim, which was not contingent upon time and place,

1. اردہان شان بونی شہنشاہی می آئد

- (1) "āgyā bhaī akāl kī tabhī chalāio pañh,
 (2) panth prachur karbe kāu-sājā dekhān aio jagat tamasa
 (3) jahān tahan tum dharam chalāo,
 kabudh karan te lok hatāo²

And, he proclaimed it in no uncertain terms that he was doing nothing which was not logical and natural entelechy of the doctrines of Guru Nanak. "He who understandeth thus, knoweth truely; He who knoweth not His truth understandeth not :"

- (3) jin[i] Jānia tin[ī] hī siddh pāī
 bin(u) Samjhai siddh[i] hañh na āī.³

The Order of the Khalsa is thus a Party of voluntary members, selected on the basis of ideology and strict psychological and character-qualifications relating to disposition and behaviour- patterns, overriding geographical, racial and sex limitations and pledged to establish a global society of Human Brotherhood, the basis of which is spiritual and the ground of which is material abundance. For this purpose, the order of the Khalsa aspires to achieve control of political power. The original sources on the Sikh doctrine and a proper understanding of it leave no doubt that this is the case and it is implicit in the text of *Japu*, the first chapter of the Guru Granth itself.

Real Prototype of the Communist Party

Once the matter is put this way, it becomes plain that the Order of the Khalsa is the only and the real prototype of the Communist Party of Lenin in so far as the ethos of both the parties is concerned and that Lenin was mistaken in this belief that his Party was a unique phenomenon in the history of human societies. The difference between the nature of their respective aims and ideologies that inspire them, are no less striking.

2. "Bachittarnatak", DG, 279, VI 29.

(ii) *Ibid*, DG, 215, V.10

3. ਜਿਨ ਜਾਨਾ ਤਿਨਹੀ ਸਿਧ ਪਾਈ॥
 ਬਿਨ ਸਮਝੇ ਸਿਧ ਰਾਖ ਨ ਆਈ॥

Fundamental Difference

The basic assumption of Marxism, which is the credo that inspires the Communist Party, is that the essence of the real is its characteristic of being perceived through the physical sense and this is its materialism which it regards as the only true philosophy and metaphysics. Sikhism sharply joins issues with Communism on this postulate. Sikhism postulates the idea as real and more primary, and conceives of reality, as ideational and not as material, and therefore asserts that man shall be regenerated and liberated through introversion in contra-distinction to the essential and exclusive acceptance of extroversion as the only true approach towards reality. This difference is fundamental, far-reaching and pregnant with significant practical consequences, and Sikhism and Communism will never meet on this issue:

*bhagatāñ te saisāriañ jor kade na aīa.*⁴

Sikhism denies Communist Theory

The communist postulate on this issue implicates another significant and far-reaching proposition of Communism, which regards all movement as real, which generates the assumption that human history is conditioned not by ideas, or man made laws, but by the economic organisation of the society, which in turn is based on the mechanism of production and exchange of goods. This is the Marxian interpretation of History. Sikhism denies this proposition and considers its apparent plausibility as naive and superficial, generated by absence of a profounder critical faculty and intuition. It is not true that all history is economic history, that all intellectual, political and social changes can be explained as consequences of changes in material production, and that class struggle that have determined the past of mankind, will determine the future until all classes have been eliminated giving birth to some utopia on earth, and Sikhism, therefore, refuses to allow its social and political organisation and conduct to be determined and deflected by this erroneous mode of thought, and the Order of the Khalsa, thus, can never countenance the all too familiar institutions of dictatorship without popular support, without an independent legal system, and without the free competition of ideas and the sharp assault of free criticism, which errors are the warp and

4. ਭਗਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਸੈਸਾਰੀਆ ਜੋੜ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਆਇਆ।

woof of a communist system.

Again, the Order of the Khalsa and the Communist Party are separated by the moral abyss that is unbridgeable. The 'immoralism' of Communism is its basic postulate, whereas the Order of the Khalsa attaches fundamental importance to the ethical character of the means than even to the ends themselves, and the Order of the Khalsa regards ethical values, howsoever dimly (discernable) in different societies and ages, as absolute and not relative and compromisable.

Brain-Washing and Physical Regimentation

Lastly, the Order of the Khalsa was intended to be an elect body, a political and spiritual aristocracy on account of its regenerated character and liable to persecution because of its pugnacious distinctiveness and refusal to compromise, pledged to reform and regenerate a deeply corrupted and unconverted world by example and precept, by persuasion and control, but never through coercion and regimentation of the mind and body, and this also places Communism and Sikhism poles apart.

Thus, Sikhism and the Order of the Khalsa, which is pledged to propagate Sikhism and to ensure its prevalence, considers the ownership of man and man's collective achievements, whether this appears as Communism or Nationalism, as the most serious challenge to the true religion, the protection of which is the main objective and aim of the Khalsa.

What is it then that has made it possible for communist ideas to obtain a hold on a section of the Sikhs?

Two Reasons for Communist's Appeal

There are two reasons: One occidental, and the other emotional.

Ever since the middle of the last century, when the Khalsa lost its sovereignty to the newlow diplomacy of the European adventurers, there has been a natural and deep rooted restlessness and frustration in the Sikh heart. Not that the occidental is/was basically immoral or unmoral just like the Communist Party, the Sikhs, only after they met with political disaster at his hands, not in the battle field but on the more slippery ground of political trickery. To Dr. Wolff who visited Lahore in 1832, Ranjit Singh said, "You say, you travel about for the sake of religion, why then do you not preach to the Englishmen in Hindustan. who have no religion

at all?" When Dr. Wolff repeated this to the Governor General, Lord William Bentinck, at Simla, he observed: 'Alas, this is the opinion of all the natives about us, all over India.' In reply to a question by Dr. Wolff, "How may one come nigh unto God?" The Maharaja replied, "One can come nigh unto God by making an alliance with the British Government as I lately did with Laird Nawab Sahib (the Governor-General) at Rupar"⁵

Nucleus of Sikh Communists

This insight into European political character, however, could not save the Sikhs from being enslaved as the rest of India had already been done. But the Sikhs, in their heart of hearts, never reconciled themselves to the loss of their sovereignty, without which the Order of the Khalsa cannot make any progress towards fulfilment of divine arrangement, their final goal. The dawn of the twentieth Century found a band of Sikh immigrants to North America organised into the wellknown ghadar Party, the Party of Meeting against and as such, on the eve of the World War I, a number of them landed on Indian Soil with the object of ousting the British hold on the country. The attempt proved abortive and most of these revolutionaries ended their lives on the gallows, or in the infernal jails of Andamans. The last words of these Sikhs in their last moments on earth are recorded.

"The Khalsa shall guide the destinies of mankind, and eventually there shall remain no opposite camp. For, all shall realize, after bitter frustration that, there is no redemption except in the way of life that the Khalsa upholds.

"This is pre-ordained that the Guru's Army shall control and guarantee the welfare of the whole of India. Then indeed, the new era of peace and prosperity for mankind shall dawn."⁶

5. Joseph Wolff, DD LLD, *Travels And Adventures*, p. 375.

6. (ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਆਕੀ ਰਹੇ ਨ ਕੋਇ।
ਖੁਆਰ ਹੋਇ ਸਭ ਮਿਲਟਗੇ, ਬਚੇ ਸਰਨ ਜੋ ਹੋਇ।
ਦਿੱਲੀ ਤਖਤ ਪਰ ਬਹੇਗੀ, ਆਪ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਫੌਜ।
ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਵੱਡੀ ਹੋਇਗੀ ਮੌਜ।

It was the remnants of these Sikh revolutionaries that constituted the nucleus of the now powerful group of the Sikh communists. They established contacts with the Comintern in the early twenties of this century, with the avowed object of securing foreign aid and help for freeing India from the foreign yoke, since Comintern was the only organisation outside India which promised such help readily. This brought some of the most ardent and sincere, not necessarily politically wise of these Sikhs, under the spell and discipline of the All Russia Communist Party and the relationship thus forged, has endured.

Emotional Appeal Twofold.

The emotional reason for the hold of the communist idea on a certain section of the Sikhs is two fold. The similarity of the Order of the Khalsa and All-Russia Communist Party of Lenin has already been suggested. The attraction of the self-sacrificing work in a dedicated spirit as is demanded of a communist field worker, comes natural to a Sikh, since it gives him ample opportunity of releasing the impulse of self-abnegation in the service of fellow-beings generated by the Sikh teachings and which Guru Gobind Singh harnessed to the Order of the Khalsa. By working as a loyal and devoted member of the Communist Party, this class of Sikhs feel that he is loving Sikhism and the teachings of the Gurus in practice, in the manner that Guru Gobind Singh enjoined. Secondly, the Sikh is not attracted by what Marx said, or by what the Party dogma of the moment is. What fascinates him and ensures his devotion to the Party is, what he thinks lies behind it, its essential humanitarianism. To be a champion of the oppressed, aid the under-privileged, is the basic Sikh motivation, and the shibolethes of the Communist parties are admirably designed to appeal to this sentiment.

Polyreligiosity

These are the basic reasons that underlie the hold of the communist idea and the influence of the Communist Party amongst a considerable number of Sikhs, though it cannot be denied that, with the lapse of time and persistent indoctrination, there has come into existence a tip, larger of Sikh communist leadership that is fully aware and that enthusiastically accepts the real hiatus that separates the teachings of the Gurus from the dogmas of Communism, but he finds it in the interests of the cause to maintain the pretension that by being a communist he is no less a Sikh.

He is shrewd enough to realise that the main function of political ideas is to express in effective and pungent manner the political attitudes which some group of people feel that it must consolidate within itself, foster in a society at large, and set up against those of its opponents, and that without this deep co-ordination of belief no common action for great ends is possible. He is, therefore, keenly aware that if he brings but too clearly the deep chasm that separates Sikhism from Communism, the Sikh communist workers, will either become non-communist or what anthropologists call, polyreligious. For this reason, and knowing that moral scruples are uncommunistic, he never attacks or repudiates Sikhism openly, in accordance with the guidelines given by the communist comrades from Moscow direct, directing the Sikhs turned communist not yet, to undo the Sikh mark from their faces and to observe Sikh religious symbolism carefully and diligently so as better to misguide and ensure the Sikhs. Here it is worth-noting that the prominent Sikh religious symbolism, unshorn hair and uncut beard, are anathema to genuine communists as symptomatic of bourgeois decadence. *Le Parisien Libre*, Paris, remarks that,

It is amusing to note that although Marx, Lenin, Ho Chih Minh and Yeidel are among the world's most famous bearded men, many communist countries consider beards as anti-social, an obvious sign of bourgeois decadence. The Rumanian Government, it seems, recently decreed the need for a special permit to wear a beard. Three grounds are considered legitimate; being an actor playing the role of a bearded character; having an executively receding chin, or scar chin. The situation has reached such a point that those men as are permitted the imperialist bourgeoisie prevalence of having hair on their chin, must carry a special card like a Driver's Licence, which they are obliged to have with them at all times and must show when challenged by the authorities.⁷

Now polyreligiosity describes a social condition in which history and myth have lost their dramatic characters, their capacity to impose obligations and compelling images, and thus they no longer provide a basis for continuity of conviction and behaviour. A polyreligious Sikh is

7. As quoted in the *Indian Reader's Digest* of March 1975, p. 30.

shorn of the very advantage which he has as a fearless and self-sacrificing revolutionary and he, therefore, becomes a useless member of the communist Party. He is a great asset only if he retains his pristine Sikh impulse intact as his motivating force in action and at the same time owes willing allegiance to the party.

This analysis alone seems to offer an explanation of the pains which the Sikh communists have taken during the last quarter of a century to win and retain an effective share and position in the Sikh political and religious societies and institutions.

Those well-informed in the subject know that in Sikhism the supreme, all-overriding value is religion, that which oppose or hinders the religious dimension of man, is pure evil : *jālaū aīṣī rū(i) jī(i) mai(n) piārā vīsarai*,⁸ while for, Communism the first priority is to destroy and suppress all religion and religious attitudes, as Lenin points out in his essay, *On the Importance of Militant Materialism*, wherein Lenin resolutely condemns "any conciliatory attitude towards religious ideology."

8. ਜਾਲਉ ਐਸੀ ਗੀਤਿ ਜਿਤੁ ਮੇ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਵੀਸਰੈ॥

SEX AND SIKHISM

[This article was originally intended to be a Post Script chapter to Sirdar Kapur Singh's forthcoming book, Sikhism and the Modern Man, (now published by the GND University with a slightly modified title), but was, later on, dropped for reasons unknown. It was then published in the form of a pamphlet and also in the Sikh Review (Oct.1979) , from where we have the pleasure to reproduce it — editors]

1. Victorian prudery had banned public reference to sex even through innuendo or oblique suggestion. Sex was ungentle and highly inelegant. Even an inevitable indulgence in it had to be heavily veneered with patriotic respectability : young ladies were taught to mutter to themselves. "God save the Queen", or "Rule Britannia, Britannia rule the waves" to remain clean and unpolluted by a direct experience of orgasm. During the thirties when this writer was a young student at Cambridge, he was obliged to cross the English Channel to procure and read a copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D.H. Lawrence. In India, where the imperial shadows of Queen Victoria have been rather lengthy and deep, an urbanite Hindu sect that arose in the Punjab in the seventies of the nineteenth century and which tailored the *Veda* to their personal requirements, has inserted in their scripture the directive that throughout, during sexual congress, the parties must keep their minds off all thoughts of sex and continue muttering, 'Om, Om', the purifying name of God.

2. Now, in the seventies of this century, pre-marital sex experience, teen age sex involvement, group sex, wife-swapping, promiscuity, homo-sex, oral sex, and public propagation of all kinds of sexual behaviour and deviations, through cinema and television, through journalism and fictional literature, is a tolerated part of the European social scene.

3. In India, less than a thousand years ago, magnificent temples in utter devotion and absolute veneration to the greatest and the holiest of the holy gods were raised, such as at Khajuraho (10th & 11th C) and

(13.C), whose grandeur and cost in gold and labour, whose high artistic skill and architectural scale and aesthetic form are amazing and breathtaking for the modern viewer. The exterior embellishments of these grand and holy structures depict and portray sex unions between men and women, in friez after friez, in infinitely varied postures, of skillfully chiselled stone entablatures that show not only the highly matured artistic sensitivity of the sculptor but also display a masterly knowledge of Hindu Erotica. It would appear that, in the mental climate of the times in which these sacred edifices were created, some deep and fundamental relationship between the erotic and the *noumenous* experience was perceived and commonly accepted.

4. Early Vedic culture aimed at kindling sex passions of male and female, *purshāgni* and *yoshāgnī*, as highly desirable and legitimate human pursuits.¹ *Rigveda* teaches Aryans to pray to the Fire god for immortality, that is, birth of children through sexual activity.² The *Rigveda*, thus not merely suggests a nexus between the sex activity of man and his deepest desire and yearning for a final escape from death but it also seems to lay down the doctrine of equating his sexual virility with the *summum bonum*, the highest goal, the highest achievement and the ultimate success: "He achieves not, he, whose penis hangs limp between the thighs; achieves he, whose hairy thing swells up when he lies" (X 86.16).³ This Vedic libidinal insight seems a remarkable precursor of the insights of certain modern utopians who see liberation of man through liberation of his instincts. Herbert Marcuse argues that modern man has been paralyzed by the "surplus repression" imposed by political and economic monopolies of our technological society, which bondage and predicament can be removed only by "erotocising the entire personality" of man so that, he may "once again learn to love and create".⁴

1. *Chhandogya*, V 7.1, 8.1.

2. *Prajābhiraṇe amṛtatvaṁ syāma*.

"प्रजाभिरग्ने अमृतत्वं स्याम"

Rigveda

3. *na seśe yasya rambate antrā sakathya akaprit*,
sedīśe yasya romaśam niśeduṣo viśvasmadindira uttrah.

"न सेशे यस्य रम्बते उत्तरा सकथ्या अकपृत्।

सेदीशे यस्य रोमशं निषेदुषो विश्वस्मादिन्द्र उत्तरः॥

ऋग्वेद, (10.86.16.)

4. Dissent N.Y. 1955.

5. Manu, the great custodian of the Vedic tradition, considers sex as one of the two pre-eminent elements in the dynamism of the psyche of man, the other being 'hunger' and declares that the basic occupational lifestyle of man alternates between 'sex' and 'hunger'.⁵

6. The Great god, Mahadeva, of Hindu trinity, Śiva, bears one of his ontological names as Erect Phallus, *Urdhavamedhar*, and also as *Penis Holder*, *shūlpānī*, indicative of autosexuality. This underlines the Hindu Vedic insight into the sex-dynamics being at the core, not only of the human psyche but also as the central element in the structure of God-head. Sigmund Freud may have revolutionized European understanding of the human nature in the 20th century by showing the 'libido' as relentlessly controlling the centrality of human psyche, and by making the '*oedipus complex*' and '*penisenvy*' as house-hold words, but the ancient subtle Hindu mind has nothing to learn from this Vienna savant.

7. Whereas in centuries' old pious Hindu sculpture and representation, god Śiva, is depicted as holding his penis in hand or otherwise bearing an erect phallus, the heterodox and equally ancient and venerable, the non-vedic Jaina tradition, by taking due notice of the centrality of sex in the structure of the divine psyche, invariably depicts and portrays its divinised men, *tīrthankars*, as 'down-penis', *pralamb linga*, such as is shown in the *gomateshvar*, giant statue at Mysore. This is to proclaim the Jaina doctrine that subjugation and subdual of sex is a pre-requisite and high water-mark of the spiritually evolved and evolving man.

8. There are two basic questions involved in the problem of sex : (1) what is the status of 'sex', as an element in the basic structure of human psyche, and (2) whether structurally fundamental or an emergent element during the history and development of human psyche, what is its role in the personal and social life of man ? This shows that the ancient as well as the modern scientific thought unanimously concede to 'sex' a primary ontological status in the structure of human psyche, and there is apparent and clear consensus that the role it plays is central and significant.

9. Generally, the sex is assigned a triple function in human life :
(1) sex as an intrinsic pleasure and an anodyne to psychological discomforts,

5. *narah vai sashanodro ratah.*

disharmonies and complexes, (2) sex as tool of procreation and subservient to continuity of life, (3) sex in relation to man's spiritual evolution and progress towards perfection. Reference has already been made to certain recent developments in the West towards freeing sex from restrictions and inhibitions and the new outlook on the subject represented by D.H. Lawrence, Freud, and Marcuse culminating in the sexual revolution of the sixties in the western societies that upholds the primacy of the pleasure principle. The primacy of its procreative function is accepted in the Rigvedic exhortation to man, to achieve the only available immortality, that is, through progeny. The soteriological function of sex as *per se* bearer of the *noumenous* experience or as a catalyst towards it, is clearly and forcefully taken up in the ancient Hindu tradition that of Tantra, greatly developed in Shakta cults and Buddhist mystic cults of *Vajrayana*. *Agam*, in the Tantra, is the opposite number of *Śruti*, the revelation, in the Vedic tradition. An *Agam* verse declares that,

Sexual coitus is the highest watermark of Yoga leading to transmutation into the First Master of Yoga.⁶

In the ancient Hindu thought, deposited in Upaniṣadic texts, the highest consciousness, realization of the Absolute Reality, is referred to as constituted by three distinct characteristics, *sat*, *cit*, *ānand*, Being, Consciousness and Bliss. The *Chhandogya* text tells us that while *sat* is independent of *cit*, the third element, *ānand* is indissolubly tied to it, for, *ānand* must be experienced, *viñānī* so that it is what it is. The modern British philosopher, F.H. Bradley (1846-1924) in his famous book, *Appearance and Reality*, holds the same view by saying that "the Perfect means the identity of ideal existence, accompanied by pleasure." From the earliest times up to the modern Hindu savant, Aurobindo Ghosh (1950), there has been profound and persistent speculation in India, with regard to the true nature and content of *ānand*.

Further on, it will be pointed out that in Sikhism these previous notions of *ānand* have been rejected in favour of a new connotation thereof, to show how this new connotation has a bearing on the status and significance of 'sex' in the Sikh scheme of things. In the *Vajrayāna*, *ānand*

6. *maithunen mahāyogī mamaullīyo na samshayah.*

is equated with *sukha*, felicity, or *mahāsukha*, the highest felicity. This *mahāsukh*, according to the identical experience and consciousness that results at the moment of a successful sexual intercourse commenced after a hearty meal of meat and wine.⁷ A Tantra text is unambiguously clear on this point. "Good wine and well-cooked meat, and also a fish preparation for a hearty meal, and then sexual intercourse along with prescribed postures, verily, these are the five pre-requisites of the Mystic Technology of Tantra that constitute a sure guarantee of spiritual Liberation for man, here and now, in all ages and to the end of Time."⁸

10. This curve of change, from prudery to free, uncensored sex in the western society during the twentieth century, is the result of certain scientific insights gained and popularized by two great modern psychologists, Sigmund Freud and Karl Jung. Freud tended to interpret all *noumenous* and emotionally significant experience as derived from, or substitutes for sex, physical and romantic sex, whereas Jung tended to interpret even sexuality itself as symbolic *noumenous* experience in that it represented an irrational union of opposites, and was thus a symbol of wholeness. Thus, sex in Freud is exclusively a biological function, while Jung views it as a vital force capable of being directed through creative channels, through sublimation.

This latter strain of thought it is that is embedded in the *Vajrayāna* of mystic Buddhism and the *yab yum* techniques of Tibetan Buddhism.

12. It is this substratum of sexual mysticism which is rejected and repudiated in Sikhism by stating that the *noumenon* of holiness and the perception of the sacred is grounded in transcendental enlightenment and emotional equipoise and not in obfuscatory thrill as *exhypothesi*, the supreme experience is characterized, through and through, by the highest mystic principle, *sattva*, equipoise of three mystic principles, *triguna*, that permeate and bind the structure of the cosmos, while the *orgastic* experience is admittedly a hybrid of the other two and inferior *gunas*, *rajas*, and *tamas*,

7. Westernitz, *History of Indian Literature*, I.

8. *madyam māsam cha meenam cha mudri maithunameva cha, etc pancha-makarasa, moksadaya yuge yuge-Kalitantra.*

† For para 11 see Appendix I

"Nanak approves of that union of polarities only wherein one term of this union is the Sovereign Transcendent Enlightenment,"⁹ which is *sattva* in character.

Likewise, Sikhism refutes and rejects another postulate of Tantric sexualism that upholds the technology of exhausting and destroying passions through passions. A verse in the prestigious *Kulāranavatāntra* states that passions can be surmounted and contained through indulging in them exhaustively.¹⁰

Sikhism refutes and rejects this postulate as grossly misconceived and demonstrably false by declaring that,

No one has ever achieved passionless calmness through unbridled indulgence in passions. Can a blazing fire ever be quenched and put off by adding more and more fuel to it? The abiding peace that knoweth no ending, is nearness to and communion with God.¹¹

As a general insight into the nature of all human somatic passions the Sikh scripture declares that :

"All unregulated human passions, eventually are generative of sorrow and disease."¹²

And,

Uncontrolled passions are the gateway to sorrow and disease and the end product of servility to senses is invariably sickness and trouble."¹³

9. *giān rāu jab sejai āvai ta nānak bhog[u] karehī.*
(ਗਿਆਨ ਰਾਉ ਜਬ ਸੇਜੈ ਆਵੈ ਤ ਨਾਨਕ ਭੋਗੁ ਕਰੇਈ)
10. *yaireva patnam dravyanih siddhistaireva ěoditā.* Gauri M1, AG, 359.
"ਯੋਰੇਵ ਪਤਨੰ ਦਿਯੈ: ਸਿਧਿਸ੍ਤੈਰੇਵ ਚੋਦਿਤਾ"
kulāranavatāntra
11. *bikhiā(n) mai(n)h kin hi tript(i) na pāi*
jio(n) pāvāk[u], k(n)ghan(i) nahi dhrāpai, bin[u] har[i] kahā aghāi
(ਬਿਖਿਆ ਮਹਿ ਕਿਨ ਹੀ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿ ਨ ਪਾਈ॥
ਜਿਉ ਪਾਵਕੁ ਈਧਨਿ ਨਹੀ ਧ੍ਰਾਪੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਹਾ ਅਘਾਈ॥)
Dhanasri, M5, AG, 672.
12. *jete ras sarīr ke tele lagah[i] dukh*
(ਜੇਤੇ ਰਸ ਸਰੀਰ ਕੇ ਤੇਲੇ ਲਗਹਿ ਦੁਖ॥)
Malar, M1, AG, 1287.
13. *bahu sādoh(n) dukh[u] prāpat hovai*
bhogaho rog so ant[i] vigovai
(ਬਹੁ ਸਾਦਹੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ॥
ਭੋਗਹੁ ਰੋਗੁ ਸੁ ਅੰਤਿ ਵਿਗੋਵੈ॥)
Maru. M1. AG. 1034

"Turning his back on God, man seeks fulfilment in sensuality and passions and reaps the harvest of distemper and disease."¹⁴

Did not the incomparable Bharatri Hari, the Sanskrit literateur, the Hindu savant, the enlightened king, a sensitive aesthete and analyst of human emotions, and the master yogi who defied death and instead entered into a deep seedless trance, so as to stage a physical resurrection at the appropriate moment in future, record in his *Vair a gyashat kam* that after a life long controlled and regulated and indulgence in pleasures of the senses, he had woefully realized that he was mistaken in believing that it was himself, who was enjoying sense pleasures, particularly the erotic, while in fact, these sense-pleasures were, all the time eating up and corroding into his own personality and mind ?¹⁵

13. This sex, about which such extreme and polarized opinions and attitudes, firm and fanatical, have been held by man in different cultural structures, societies and ages, must be something profound and mysterious, fundamental, compulsive and pervasive, to move and condition man in this manner.

14. Ancient Greek wisdom, the judaic mature thought and ripe understanding of man almost every where and in all societies have realized and agreed upon two things : (1) that life of man is too short, evanescent and fleeting to justify his conceiving and achieving any serious and enduring purpose or project, and (2) all earthly achievements of man are perishable and vain:

It is also, too true that human life is perishable and a passing show like the stuff of a dream. And man's all earthly achievements are exposed to decay and death having no make substance than the shade

14. *khasam(u) visār[i] kie ras[u] bhog
ta(ñ) tan[i] utth[i] khaloe rog.*

(ਖਸਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ ਕੀਏ ਰਸ ਭੋਗ॥
ਤਾਂ ਤਨਿ ਉਠਿ ਖਲੋਏ ਰੋਗ)

Malar, M1, AG, 1256.

15. *bhogā na bhukta vyameva bhuktān*

"भोगा ल भुक्ता वयमेव भुक्ता"

(वैराग्यशतक भर्तृहरि)

of a circus cloud.¹⁶

The human life, as it appears, has no in-built aim and, therefore, it cannot be explained by itself and as such, it has no meaning, no value, no point; it is too short, too unreal, too ephemeral, too illusory, and *mayaic* for anything to be demanded of it, to be built upon it, to be created out of it. Its whole meaning lies outside it, elsewhere and on another plane. It is an exanthem of the point earlier made in this book (*Sikhism for Modern Man*) that all that is visible is rooted in the invisible.

15. Our physical birth is intimately connected with 'sex', with the division of the sexes and with their attraction to one another, with love and the artistic creativity which this love generates and sustains. This attraction of the sexes to one another constitutes one of the chief motive forces, and its intensity and its formal proliferation, determine all other qualities and characteristics in man. A serious thought on sex makes it clear and obvious that the first and foremost aim of sex is the continuation of life and the securing of this continuation. The orgasmic thrill of sex is the most elemental and intense experience available to an ordinary man.

16. Here in lies the mystery and the secret of sex; the pitfalls and dangers of sex; the morphinism of its clash and clamour, its flash and sparkle; and confusion and nescience born out of its profusion and promenade. Its original aim, that of procreation and continuation of life, recedes and is lost and no understanding of its possible other and higher aims arises. Man vainly seeks significance and meaning of sex in the orgasmic experience itself and thus ends in endless degeneration and downfall, self-destroying, sorrow and suffering, suicidal ennui and emptiness. It is towards this tragedy of man that the Guru Granth Sahib makes a poignant, picturesque reference :

O, my foolish mind, have you ever carefully witnessed as to how they capture and enslave a free elephant in the forest ? They manipulate the great mystery of sex created by God. A life-like

16. (i) *jhūtha tan(u) sākā kar(i) mānio jio(n) supnā raināi*
(ਝੂਠਾ ਤਨੁ ਸਾਕਾ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਜਿਉ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਰੈਨਾਈ)

Gauri, M 9, AG, 219

- (ii) *jo disai so sagal bināsai, jio bādar kī chhāi.*
(ਜੋ ਦੀਸੈ ਸੋ ਸਗਲ ਬਿਨਾਸੈ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਦਰ ਕੀ ਛਾਈ)

Ibid., 219.

paper- she-elephant is placed on a concealed pit from which there is no escape or exit. Thus it is enslaved for life to obey and to labour for his master and to suffer cruel wounds of the iron goad."¹⁷

This mysterious and terrible hold of sex to lure the unsuspecting beast from all life-forms has been manipulated, in our time for the purpose of gaining victory in the titanic current struggle for shaping the nature of man and programming and computerizing his destiny, through equating man with God. The struggle is for achieving mind-control, a pavlova mastery through planned conditioning. Sex and hypnosis is the single, most vital component of mind-control. Drugs and sex combined to remove conscious resistance as a prelude to hypno-programming is capable of making man into an unwitting robot thus making the question of sex almost irrelevant for the individual and rendering, whatever ultimate purpose God might have had in creating the Universe.

17. A rationalization of orgasmic thrill in itself being a goal of nature, is, sometimes, made out in the immense surplus of sex energy created by nature, far in excess of that understandably required for procreation of species. It is argued that if procreation and maintenance of its levels through sex were the main and exclusive aim of nature the excessiveness of the surplus of individual's sex energy would not have been so much out of proportion, as it is, to this main and exclusive aim. It is therefore, obvious—this argument proceeds—that, the nature intends sex-indulgence as desirable in itself as a necessary element in and pre-condition of human physical and mental normalcy.

18. This is the basic argument out of which the current sex behaviour's legitimatizing free libido, unshackled and uncensored eroticism, originate and take their cue.

19. That this argument is by no means conclusive and misses a point or two can be demonstrated.

20. The obvious excessive surplus endowment of sex-energy does not necessarily prove that the excess is for sheer enjoyment and for no

17. *kālbūt kī hastant, man bauṛa re, chaḷt: [u] rachio jagdis.
kām suai gaj bas[i] pare man baurā re, ankas[u] sahio sis.
(ਕਾਲਬੂਤ ਕੀ ਹਸਤਨੀ ਮਨ ਬਉਰਾ ਰੇ ਚਲਤੁ ਰਹਿਓ ਜਗਦੀਸ॥
ਕਾਮ ਸੁਆਇ ਗਜ ਬਸਿ ਪਰੇ ਮਨ ਬਉਰਾ ਰੇ ਅੰਕਸੁ ਸਹਿਓ ਸੀਸ)*

other purpose. Other plausible purposes and acceptable aims can be seen and shown.

21. By considering how small a proportion of sex-energy is actually used for the continuation of life, we can understand the hidden principles of many aspects of nature. Nature creates an immense pressure, and immense tension to attain an aim so that although an infinitesimal fraction of the created energy is used for the actual attainment of the aim, and yet this originalism, would not be attained without this immense upsurge of energy that can enslave and blind man to serve nature, without which surplus energy, a conscious throttling and thwartment of the aim of nature, cannot be eliminated and frustrated. It is the immensity of this surplus energy that forces man to serve the aim of nature in the belief that he is serving himself, his own passions and his own desires. This is the point made out in the Guru Granth Sahib, when the *māyā* is spoken of as "deceitful strategem"¹⁸ of nature that appears to be, what it is not and which approaches and achieves a fixed goal deviously, diplomatically, and not directly, so as to eliminate anticipatory opposition, through incapacitation, as a "boa constrictor immobilises its prey by compression in its coils."¹⁹

22. The dis-easement, mental tensions and psychological distortions that ensue from as unsatisfying unduly suppressed and blocked sex life, a preceptive investigation of which syndrome, during the early decades of this century in Europe, has created the pseudoscience of psycho-analysis and the voodoo of 'psychiatry', are, in fact, secondary developments, of mishandled sex and their resolvment and cure is not necessarily or mainly through unshackling the libidinous reservoir, as has been misunderstood by the modern western man.

23. There is another way out merging into the highway leading to a high destiny for man that Sikhism points out and teaches.

18. *māi māyā chhal[u]*
(ਮਾਈ ਮਾਇਆ ਛਲੁ)

Todi, M 5, AG, 717.

19. *māyā hoī nāgani jagat[i] raht laptāi*
(ਮਾਇਆ ਹੋਈ ਨਾਗਨੀ ਜਗਤਿ ਰਹੀ ਲਪਟਾਇ)

Gujari Var, Sloka M3, AG, 510.

(i) Nature has endowed man with excessively surplus reservoir of libidinous energy, enormously disproportionate to minimal requirements for purposes of procreation and maintenance of its proper levels.

(ii) Normally, a blockage or coercive control of this energy results in distortion and disfigurement of psychological harmony and easement of man.

(iii) But blasting off its embankments and dismantling of all reasonable barriers and censorious controls built to regulate its free flow, in the form of instinctual imperatives and abundant precautions, is even worse, as are the current diagnosis and cures conceived by some pseudo-sciences or plausible voodooos in the West, in particular, and accepted and approved by the modern man in general.

(iv) Sex-energy is central to human psyche and all other energies, intellect, with feelings and emotional afflorescence feed on the surplus of sex-energy and there is no other energy, endowed to man by nature, that can replace sex-energy.

(v) Sex desires and sex sensations, in themselves, are neither a necessary or basic ingredient in the purest and highest level of human consciousness, nor do they provide an unerring cue to such a level of human consciousness. Nevertheless, there are, in the emotional experience connected with genuine love, even infatuation as it lasts strange sensations inexplicable from ordinary point of view; and such strange sensations are also integral to sex experience or orgasmic thrills that carry a taste melancholy and sadness, vividly hinted and portrayed in almost all romantic poets in all ages, akin to the sensations of farewell at parting and of an imminent journey towards a strange and foreign, unfamiliar land.²⁰ The fact of the matter is that, in such experiences new levels of consciousness arise wherein new emotions that are born cause previous intense emotions of love, sex to fade and disappear. This is the mysterious junctional point of the sex-based emotions and the mystical experience not yet the *noumenous* experience. This junction is no proof of the identity

20. (a) *ham kahīn dūr kahīn dūr chale jāēi ge—Sāhir Ludhiānāvī*
 (b) *rahie ab aīsī jagah chal kar jahān kōī na ho—Ghālīb.*

or same-ness of these two categories of experiences and that explains why a contact with this junctional point merely leaves an autumnal taste behind²¹, a taste of something that must cede its place to something else, but provides no positive taste of this something else. But in the light of the genuine mystical experience this junctional experience of amorphous melancholy disappears²² and when the effulgence of true *noumenous* experience shines, the first experience completely disappears and the second is submerged and consumed by the *noumenous* effluence.²³

(vi) Undoubtedly and demonstrably, there is some strange and elusive relationship between mystical experiences and experiences of sex; and of all ordinary human experiences only sex experience and sensations approach those which we call the mystical and the *noumenous*. This is the relationship and the fact apparently accorded public recognition in the external erotic representations on the Khajuraho and Konark temples and it is precisely this similitude that has lured and misguided the Tantric Hindu systems and Buddhist varieties of sexual mysticism. This explains why, in the Guru Granth Sahib, the Shaktic ways of life²⁴ are bracketed with the other two : (1) deviation from truth²⁵ and (2) non-authentic living²⁶ as the most dangerous pitfalls to be avoided by a man of religion.

21. *man[u] pardeṣī je thīlai sabh[u] des[u] prāiā.*

(ਮਨੁ ਪਰਦੇਸੀ ਜੇ ਥੀਐ ਸਭੁ ਦੇਸੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ)

Suhi, M1, AG. 767.

22. *ohu ras[u] piā ihu ras[u] nahī bhavā.*

(ਉਹ ਰਸੁ ਪੀਆ ਇਹ ਰਸੁ ਨਹੀ ਭਾਵਾ)

Gauri Kabir, AG, 342.

23. *kahai nānak[u] hor[i] an ras sabh[i] vīsarai jā har[i] rasa man[i] ai.*

ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਹੋਰਿ ਅਨ ਰਸ ਸਭਿ ਵੀਸਰੇ ਜਾ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਆਇ॥

Ramkali, Anandu, M3, AG. 921.

24. *birthu sākat kī ārjā*

(ਬਿਰਥੀ ਸਾਕਤ ਕੀ ਆਰਜਾ)

Gauri, Sukhmani, M5, AG, 269.

25. *eko dharam[u] drirṭaḥ sach[u] koī*

(ਏਕੋ ਧਰਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜੈ ਸਚੁ ਕੋਈ)

Basant, M1, AG, 1188.

26. *jah karnī tah purf mat[i].karnī bājōn ghate ghat[i]*

(ਜਹ ਕਰਨੀ ਤਹ ਪੂਰੀ ਮਤਿ॥ ਕਰਨੀ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਘਟੇ ਘਟਿ)

Sri Raga, M1, AG, 25.

(vii) 'Normal' sex-life, 'natural' sex-life, 'proper' sex-life, or whatever the normative adjective applicable here might be, is neither, in exaggerated development of sex energy through pathological, mental and physical preoccupation and indulgence, which is degenerative and 'the straight road to hell'²⁷ the only 'exit out of which is transmigration, birth and death, again and again, endlessly', not, in complete abstinence from sex and asceticism, whether in the mistaken belief that, sex-ejaculation is death and complete sex-continence is conquest over death,²⁸ or in the erroneous postulate that 'ascetic abstinence is the first pre-requisite of and step in a life of religion.'²⁹ Sikhism pertinently asks that if complete sex abstinence is, in itself, a guarantee of *summum bonum* why do not all born eunchoids go straight to heaven?³⁰

(viii) Sikhism teaches that a normal and proper sex-life is a regulated and duly controlled life in which sex functions are coordinated to the entire psyche of man, his- instinctual, emotional and intellectual functions, so that he lives and develops as nature has intended that he should, and God has designed that he ought to. A man's thoughts, emotions, instincts, aspirations and intuitions, nothing contradicts sex, nor does sex contradict any normal element in human psyche. Sex, therefore, is completely justified in the inwardness of man. Any contradiction arises only when such a harmony and coordination is not achieved. "Such is the marked distinction of Sikhism that it points out a high road to man for the achievement of *summum bonum* through a harmonious, well-disciplined worldly life in which the emotions, desires and hopes of man are in mutual coordination and harmony."³¹

27. *he kāman narāk bisrāman bahu jonī bhramāvanah*

(ਹੇ ਕਾਮੰ ਨਰਕ ਬਿਸ੍ਰਾਮੰ ਬਹੁ ਜੋਨੀ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਵਣਹ)

Slok Sahaskriti M5, AG, 1358.

28. *marṇam bindupāten dhāranāt bindu jīvanam.*

"मरणं बिन्दुपातेन धारणादु बिन्दु जीवनम्"

29. *kanchan kanya paritajyami.*

bind(u) rākh(i) Jau tarai bhāl, Khusrai Kio(n) na param gat(i) pāl.

(ਬਿੰਦੁ ਰਾਖਿ ਜੋ ਤਰੀਐ ਭਾਈ॥

ਖੁਸਰੈ ਕਿਉ ਨ ਪਰਮ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ॥)

Gauri Kabirji, AG. 324.

31. *sat[i]gur kī aisi vadiāt, putra kalatra viche gat[i] pāl*

(ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਐਸੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ॥ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਕਲਤ੍ਰ ਵਿਚੇ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ)

Dhanasari, M1, AG, 661.

24. Within this frame-work of Sikh understanding of the status and significance of sex in human life, the Sikh Prophets teach mankind to accept and adopt a practically monogamous and permanent marriage-based family as the inerodible foundation of all social organisation³² and (2) to endeavour to employ this monogamous family, based on mutual love and purity of marital faithfulness³³ for transmutation of the excessive surplus of human libidinous reservoir for his highest spiritual evolution, through the specific Sikh discipline of *Namayoga*. The Sikh marriage ceremony called, the *Anand-karaj*, meaning, "A blue-print for attainment of abiding Bliss," is formed by ritual recitation of the Sikh scriptural text, the *anandu*, in which are detailed the four progressive steps designed to guide the married couple on to the discipline of orientation and coordination of somatic marital relationship with the spiritual development and evolution of the couple, in unison, to reach the *summum bonum*.

25. Through acceptance and implementation of these two precepts, man will restore and regulate sex to its proper place in his psyche and life, he will avoid the dangerous pitfalls of pathological and degenerative sex, and he will be enabled to evolve, so as to realize his highest potentialities and thus to build up and sustain a sane, civilized, spiritually evolving society which is 'the ultimate purpose of the Creation, epiphany of the Perfect Man.'³⁴

32. *sagal dharam main grihast pradhān hai*
(ਸਗਲ ਧਰਮ ਮੇ ਗ੍ਰਹਸਤ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ)

Bhai Gurdas.

33. (a) *ek narī jāī hoe par-narī dhī bhain vakhāvai*
(ਏਕ ਨਾਰੀ ਜਤੀ ਹੋਇ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਧੀ ਭੈਣ ਵਖਾਵੈ)

Ibid.

- (b) *par narī ki sej bhūl supnehu na jāio*
(ਪਰਨਾਰੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਜ ਭੁਲ ਸੁਪਨੇਹੁ ਨ ਜਾਇਓ)

Dasamgranth.

- (c) *par triya rūp(u) na pekhai netar.*
(ਪਰ ਤ੍ਰਿਅ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਪੇਖੈ ਨੇਤ੍ਰੁ॥)

Gauri M5, AG. 274.

34. *Sant het(i) prabh(i) tribhavan dhāre.*
(ਸੰਤ ਹੇਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਧਾਰੇ॥)

Gauri M1., AG. 224.

THE TWO QUESTIONS

A German intellectual, Dr. Victor Muckjet-Jun, of Dusseldorf, Germany, sent the following two questions to the S.G.P.C., Amritsar, sometime in the first half of the year 1959. Answers to these questions were prepared by Sirdar Kapur Singh, I.C.S. which are reproduced below.

Q.No.1. Is Sikhism only good for India and the Hindus, or good for all peoples, for we Germans also ?

A. The question may mean two different things and may be split up in two parts accordingly :

The first, is Sikhism ex-hypothesis, that is, on the basis of its own initial claims, only intended for a particular people or country, or does it claim to be oecumenical for the whole mankind ?

The second, is Sikhism a religion that fulfils the highest aspirations and meets with the requirements of modern man, irrespective of his history, race and geography?

The first part of the question can be clearly answered, without recourse to dogma while the answer to the second part has to be based upon an opinion, which, in the case of every intelligent and unbiased man, should only be arrived at after proper study and thought.

The claim of the founders of the Sikh religion is that it is eminently suitable for the modern man, irrespective of his race or the clime in which he lives. Its basic propositions are of universal import, namely :

(i) The order of Reality revealed by the properly cultivated religious experience is the only true Reality.

(ii) A vision and unitive experience of this Reality is the only true activity fit for serious and mature minds.

(iii) Man is capable of pursuing this activity consistently with making his own livelihood in the context of his socio-political activities and without denial and renunciation of the world around him.

(iv) The most efficacious way to this transformation is the psychological-cum-ethical discipline, which is the heart of the Sikh religion, the way of the Name, or *Noumenon*. The Sikh Prophets, the Gurus, declare again and again in the Sikh Scripture in the following strain :

Hail, hail, the Light of God, which has manifested through the Guru, for, these truths shall transform the whole of mankind.¹

Whosoever shall hear and follow the Nanaks, the Sikh Prophets, shall transcend the limits which at present circumscribe the human personality.²

Sikhism further claims the brotherhood of all men and the fatherhood of a Personal God, and it does not countenance the assertion that any one people or person is chosen by God for a unique and final revelation of Truth, and it thus asserts the fundamental unity of all religions.

The second part of the question must be answered by every man for himself, after study and unbiased inquiry. Sikhism discourages imposition in any shape or form, in this respect.

Q.No.2. Are there prophets in the Bible, or the Vedas, or the Quran, who tell us about the advent of Guru Nanak ?

A. The question conceals a postulate which Sikhism does not accept as self-evident or demonstrably true. The postulate is that the Truth of Religion is beyond the reach of human perception unless a unique and final revelation of it is vouchsafed by God to mankind through a specially appointed individual. It is the basic postulate of the judaic religious tradition, of the religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam that the truths of religion have been exclusively and finally revealed in a unique and final act at a single point in Space-Time. From this it follows that any new

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1. *so sat[i]gur[u] pūrā dhann[u] dhann[u] hai
jin[i] har[i] opdes[u] de sabh sist[i] savāri.*

(ਸੋ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਪੂਰਾ ਧਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਹੈ॥
ਜਿਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਸਿਸ੍ਟਿ ਸਵਾਰੀ)

Var Vadhans, M4, AG, 586.

2. *jo jo saraṇ(i) pario gur nānak, abhai dān sukha pāi
ਜੋ ਜੋ ਸਰਣਿ ਪਰਿਓ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਭੈ ਦਾਨੁ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਏ॥*

Bilaval, M5, AG, 820.

religion or even a new interpretation of religion must be authorised by the evidence already contained in this final and unique act; otherwise, it is a *priori errant*, a heresy. Sikhism, on the other hand, teaches that the Truth of Religion is *abinitio* embedded in the heart of man and that its ultimate validity is to be discerned in human experience itself, and not in any thing extraneous, though Sikhism admits that there have been, and shall be, extraordinarily gifted persons in whom the Truth of Religion has assumed unusual vividness and thus their revelations and teachings are of immense help to mankind, such as the ten Sikh Prophets, the Gurus.

The *Pentateuch*, the *Bible* and the *Quran* are the documents of a single historical tradition and movement, the Judaic, and these books, therefore, lay claims for the validity of their revelations on the basis of the aforementioned postulate. The postulate had become the cornerstone of all classical thought, not only the religious, in the ancient world, the Semitic, the Greek and the Hindu, and it was assumed that whatever was truly true had already been known, and that, therefore, the only legitimate inquiry for man was to search for a true exegesis, and not for a new discovery.

The modern age of mankind was made possible only when this postulate was dropped and discarded *qua* every field of human inquiry, and now to retain it in the matter of the Truth of Religion cannot be acceptable to any truly enlightened mind.

It is precisely for this reason, for refusing to come out of the prison of this unwarranted postulate, that the old world religions, the Semitic and the Aryan, have become out-dated for the true needs of mankind today. Do not the exclusory claims of the *Pentateuch*, the *Bible*, and the *Quran* that the final and unique revelation of God's Truth is deposited in their respective texts alone, contradict and cancel out one another, and thus reduce all such claims *absurdum*.

Vedic texts do not by themselves make any such claim of being the depository of the only true, final and exclusive revelation, though a claim of this nature has been made in respect of these texts by their exponents. It is asserted that the Veda is eternal and all-true, not on account of its unique revelation in a single point of Space-Time, but a corollary of certain logical postulates, too intricate and obscure to be expounded here,

given in the *Mimamsa* School texts of the Hindus. The Veda text does not pretend to contain the prophecies of the kind contemplated in the question under answer, and besides, it is highly cryptic and obscure as necessitated by the logic of its own argument, which is that, while approaching the Truth, human comprehension fails at the final stages. Therefore, the gods have a partiality for the obscure and the double-think; *proksa kama hi devah*, declares the *Nirukta*.³ If, therefore, attempts can be made to discover the secrets of atomic fission in the Veda-texts, it should not be an impossible task, given the necessary ingenuity, to find authority in the texts, for the advent of Guru Nanak.

But Sikhism does not stand in need of any such evidence to establish its validity.

A text of the post-Vedic Hindu canon, called, the *Bhavishyapurāṇa*, to which the Hindu scholars assign the pre-Christian centuries as the date of its compilation, contains, in a summary form, the substance of the *Book of Genesis* from Adam to Abraham. (Pargiter. *Dynasties of Kali Age*, p. xviii) This text also contains the following prognostications concerning the advent of Guru Nanak in the modern age :

*tadvai lokrakshārtham, malechhānu nashhetve,
paschamesu śubhe deśe, vedi-vamśe ca Nanakah:*

This means that :

At this period of Time, for the upliftment of mankind, for the destruction of its sickness and impurities, Nanak shall take birth in the blessed western region of India in the tribe of the high-caste Veda-knowers.

[Courtesy : Reproduced from *The Sikh Review*, June 1959, pp.26-29]

3. "परोक्षकामा हि देवाः।"

निरुल-7,1.

4. "तद्वै लोकरक्षार्थं म्लेच्छानामाश्रयेतवे।
पश्चिमेषु शुभे देशे वेदीवंशे च नानकः।।"

(भविष्यपुराण)

SIKH SYMBOLS AND CONFORMISM

Sardar Pushpinder Singh Puri has written a very interesting and informative article on the Sikhs in Canada in the February issue of *The Sikh Review*.

He informs us that the younger generation of Sikhs in Canada defines Sikhism 'in a slightly different way than it is defined in the native Punjab ; He goes on to tell us that there, in Canada, 'a Sikh especially the young one, considers that so long as he expresses his faith in the teachings of Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh and considers Guru Granth Sahib as the holy scripture of Sikh Religion, he is Sikh'. He goes on, 'the hint is clear, he is not prepared to accept the traditional physical outlook (sic) of a Sikh, which was made compulsory by Guru Gobind Singh by imposing on the Sikhs the five Ks. He advocates the essence of Sikhism in the script and soul and not in the physical requirements.'

The writer concludes the point by informing us that the young Sikh in Canada 'pleads that the need of the time is different and that to fit in the Canadian pattern of life we will have to look like others.'

Mr. Puri offers an apology for all this by adding that, 'though the faith from tradition is shaken, faith in Sikhism stays.'

While it is possible to understand and even appreciate the attitudes of the younger generation of the Sikhs in Canada and elsewhere outside India, it is not easy to accept it either as logical or as otherwise capable of defence from the point of view of the Sikh doctrines and the historical role the Sikhs are required to play according to the vision of the Gurus.

The psychological need to look like others who are in a majority and also in a position to impose their approval-judgements on a strange minority amidst them, is all too obvious. The writer of these lines, while a student at Cambridge in Great Britain during the forties of this century, was personally made aware of this social stress for a number of years. But the more he has thought over this question, the more he is convinced that

those who surrender to the foreign social ethos of non-Sikh societies neither display any exemplary integrity or strength of character, nor much proficiency in logical thinking and nor even profound wisdom. Conformism is the easiest response to antagonism and stresses of a social and emotional character such as the presence of a strange minority in foreign social surroundings generates. Conformism releases an individual from the terrible tension of being different from others all the time, in a foreign social atmosphere, but when this has been said, all has been said in favour of the attitudes of the young Sikhs in Canada and elsewhere.

Firstly, it is not easy to sympathize with a point of view which arrogates to itself the authority to define Sikhism, 'in a slightly different way', from how it has been defined by the founders of Sikhism and the collective national consensus of the historical Sikh community. This arrogation is escapist cowardice, if words are not to be minced. It would perhaps be less presumptuous and more honest to adopt and declare an attitude of a personal incapacity to act upon and sustain the true definition of religious requirements than to assume the competence to 'redefine' what ought to be the true Sikhism. Heresy, apostasy and defection from a religion are more honest names for the attitude that underlies the claim to 'redefine' a religion. Those who shirk from calling a spade a spade and do not admit this truth to themselves merely push their personalities into emotional conflicts and complexes which do more damage to themselves than the gains they seek to achieve by the circuitous path they thus follow. Is it more profitable for the point of view of individual himself to be utterly honest with oneself and admit what he really intends and does, or is it a cleverer or wiser path to conceal the true contours of one's own hidden urges and temporary emotional problems such as arise in the case of Sikhs when they try to transplant themselves in a social milieu altogether strange from, if not hostile to the fundamental insights into Reality, represented by the religious way of life of their ancestors? Any psychiatrist or a psychoanalyst practitioner will not hesitate as to which advice to give under the circumstances. By arguing falsely that while they are actually defecting from Sikhism they are merely 're-defining' it, is to create greater problems than those which are sought to be solved. This is one important aspect of the problem to be seriously considered by the younger generation of the Sikhs in Canada.

The second point, which is no less important for them, is that in Sikhism, unlike many older religions such as Islam, Mahayan Buddhism, and certain varieties of Christianity, mere verbal assent to a faith is of no avail. The young Sikh in Canada seems to think that he has the capacity and authority to separate the essence of Sikhism from the formally non-essential, and that thereby he achieves access to the kernel of religion and discards the husks. What that 'essence' and 'kernel' is, he alone presumes to be the final judge of it. It was maintained in the past, in the older religions that if a votary of religion just makes a true and unreserved assent to a certain verbal formula, which was supposed to encase the 'truth' of that religion, the devotee was automatically saved thereby. From Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, constant and repeated stress was laid on the divergence of religious stand of Sikhism on the point, namely, that the essence of religion is not the dogma or the formula, for, what people think is relatively secondary; what matters is the true substance of the dogma and the formula which is expressed in the acts of men and not in the mere words or utterances of men. This incidentally, is the new movement of humanism where Catholics, Protestants, and Marxists move in common disregarding different formulae and ideologies that separate them. This central truth of Sikhism is enshrined in the revelation of Guru Nanak himself, *gallī(n) bhist(i) na jātai chuṭṭai sachch(u) kamāi* : "the goal can be achieved only through the deed and not the word".¹

It is obvious, therefore, that the very claim which the young Sikhs of Canada thus make of redefining Sikhism for themselves is not only highly presumptuous, but it also constitutes a defiance of the starting point of Sikhism. Thereby, these young Sikhs do not accept or practise Sikhism but repudiate and defect from it. It is necessary for the young Sikhs to be clear in their minds on this second point also.

The last point to bear in mind is as to what culture, which includes the practice of religion, consists in. In the UNESCO sponsored book, *Traditional Cultures in South East Asia*, the following definition of culture is given:

1. ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ॥

Var Majh, Slok, I 1, AG, 141.

Culture means the total accumulation of all material objects, ideas and symbols, beliefs, sentiments, values and forms which are passed from one generation to another in any given society.

The belief, therefore, of the young Sikhs of Canada that they can diverge from the culture of the older Sikh generations nurtured in Punjab and yet can remain whole Sikhs is shown to be altogether fantastic when this definition of culture is kept in view. What the young Sikhs of Canada are doing is not a continuation of the culture of their ancestors but a hiatus and a break from that culture and let there be no mistake about it. No matter how unpleasant and unpalatable this truth sounds to the rebellious young mind planted in the current chaotic, moral and spiritual, atmosphere of the Western societies, it is the truth.

The keshas, the turban, the iron bangle and all these details which keep the Sikhs and the Sikh life separate from the majority of mankind surrounding them, are of the utmost spiritual importance when they are properly considered. They are the fence surrounding their daily life, they are not their daily life itself. They make it possible for Sikhism to survive, but they are not the reasons for that survival.

The Sikhs from Punjab, who during the unsettled history of the community during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, settled in U.P. and Mysore and other parts of India, were completely submerged in the surrounding sea of Hindus by the end of the nineteenth century as soon as they gave up their peculiar Sikh symbols, and outward forms. They even forgot their origins as Sikhs and it is only now, during the last twenty or thirty years, that evidence has been dug up and discovered from the past memories and other bits of evidence concerning these communities that they are originally Sikhs from the Punjab. The sturdy Sikhs from the Punjab who settled in the early twentieth century in South America, Argentina and Brazil and Mexico, have been almost completely submerged into the majority Catholic Christian community by the middle of the twentieth century once they abandoned their peculiar religious symbols.

It requires no prophetic insight to know the fate of these young Sikhs in Canada once they abandon the peculiar symbols of Sikhism ordained by the Guru himself to whom they profess their total allegiance in this

world and the next. This fate shall be no different from the fate of those who turn their backs on the Sun in whose light they hope to walk and move about.

True, Sikhs remain Sikhs inspite of every pressure and temptation, because it is basically good and satisfying to be a Sikh and not because they are forbidden to shingle and shave or to smoke the deadly nicotine poison. And, it is basically good and satisfying to remain a Sikh because of the deep spirituality and the profound faith in the Word of the Guru. and not merely because of observance of certain forms or verbal assent to certain formulae. But this neither detracts from the vital relevance of these forms and formulae to the all-important question of ultimate survival, nor authorizes any one to deviate from or redefine Sikhism as originally revealed by the Gurus. Such a stance is simply impermissible as well as dangerously unwise.

When at the location of present-day Muktsar the Sikh elders of Majha, in 1706 A.D. presumed to request Guru Gobind Singh to reshape his postures towards the political power by 'redefining' Sikhism, the response of the Guru was sharp and to the point : *Sikh hovat lebe updes[i], devat ho biprīt vīsē[u]*,² a true Sikh hears and obeys but you are cursed and contrary and presume to advise and guide the Guru.

The present age calls not for prohibitions, it is true, but for positive contribution of religion though conditions necessary for preserving the ethos and the milieu out of which that contribution is most likely to come, must also be preserved and sustained with utmost care and devotion. One cannot live without the other and this is the arcane meaning of the part of our congregational prayer in which we ask from the Unseen Power that "each Sikh may be given the strength to remain steadfast in his faith in Sikhism up to his last breath on this earth with his sacred hair and symbols unmolested".

The great Sāṃkaraċārya taught the fundamental classification of human activity and goals into two categories, the *preya* thoughts and actions are those which give easement to immediate stresses and problems and lead to passing pleasures of life. The *shreya* actions and attitudes in life are those that ultimately lead to enduring satisfaction and spiritual

2. ਸਿਖ ਹੋਵਤ ਲੇਬੇ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼। ਦੇਵਤ ਹੋ ਬਿਪਰੀਤ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼॥

achievements. The claim of religion is to teach men to sift the *preya* from the *shreya*. The path which the young generation of Sikhs propose to tread in Canada and elsewhere is the road to the *preya* mode of life. The path which Sikhism claims to show men is the *shreya* mode of life. When one is young and feels the pulsations of bewitching spring of sensations and pleasures as the only real thing in life, one is irresistibly drawn to the *preya*. But when the hectic pulls of sensations and passing pleasures weaken and are slackened and the mind matures and gains strength for appreciating and pursuing enduring values of life, then it is the *shreya* path which appeals to properly cultured human mind. Throughout the modern western societies in which are to be included the Communist forms of societies, there is evident the uncontrolled yearning for the *preya* to the exclusion of the *shreya*. But this is only a passing phase. As the signs already indicate on the horizon, the mankind must turn its face to the Sun of religion as refuge from the uncertainties and frustrations of the modern western way of life.

Sikhism and its formal life represent the Light to which mankind is destined to return sooner or later and it seems, sooner than later. Has not the Guru prophesied this in the Sikh scripture itself that the eternal Truths of religion cannot be finally abandoned by man: *eh vastu tajī nah jāī nit nit rakh[u] ur[i] dharo*.³

Courtesy : The Sikh Review, April 1973, pp. 20-23 where it appeared under the title of Sikh Symbols and the Sikh in Canada.

3. ਏਹ ਵਸਤੁ ਤਜੀ ਨਹ ਜਾਈ॥ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਰਖੁ ਉਰਿ ਧਾਰੇ॥

Mundavani M5, AG, 1429.

SIKH BAPTISMAL DISCIPLINE

(A critique on the Sikh Cult propagated by Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh of the Akhand Kirtani tradition)

For almost three decades (1920-1950), the years of great excitement, emotional upheaval and an upsurge of political consciousness amongst the Sikhs, Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh became and remained a legendary figure in Sikh estimation. A daring and bold revolutionary, a staunch adamant Sikh, a singularly firm anchorite and a man of great spiritual eminence and high integrity, he was universally honoured amongst his coreligionists as a genuine mystic and an undaunted, steadfast practitioner of orthodox Sikhism.

2. Apart from his adventurous life of suffering and fortitude, penance and faith, spiritual search and realisation, his views and dogmas about Sikhism and its practices, his concepts and guidelines bequeathed to his admirers, are of special interest to the Sikhs and to those genuinely interested in their religion: (1) His innovative guidelines relating to the Sikh baptismal ritual, the *amrit* ceremony, (2) his peculiar amendment to the Sikh religious discipline, the *rahit*, and (3) his singular stress on the cardinal Sikh mode of worship, *Kirtan*, emphasising music as a catalysing aid to *noumenous* religious experience, are there as live issues.

3. While Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh's intrusions into and innovations in the first (1) and (2) matters are not above controversy, his emphasis on and practice of *kirtan* as a central mode of Sikh worship has not only given birth to a continuing impulse after his passing away, but it also claims and compels our attention to an intricate subject of enduring interest, namely, the questions of (a) the nature and ontological status of musical expression and experience, and (b) its relationship to religious experience and practices of Sikhism.

4. But before reverting to this engrossing topic of music and Sikh religion, some observations must be made about the innovative

excursions of Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh into the Sikh baptismal ritual and the formal discipline obligated on the initiate, the *amritdhari Singh*.

5. It is well known that a Sikh, after being initiated as a *Singh*, is required to observe five positive commandments and to abstain from four remissnesses, called 'Major Lapses', the *bajjar kurahits*. A *Singh* must keep intact on him five symbols, all their names beginning with a 'k' and he must not commit four grave breaches of formal and social discipline. About these five k's and the four 'grave breaches' there has been almost a unanimous agreement amongst the Sikhs, with a few rare and heterodoxical deviations by those who wanted to form a schismatic group. Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh, has sought to introduce a couple of daring changes and innovations in these 'do' and 'don't's' while insisting all the time that he was re-establishing the original and genuine orthodoxy in Sikh baptismal practices and discipline, without, however, pointing out any precedent or authority on which he based his deviation and, thus, imposing these deviations, through the sheer weight of his personal reputation as a staunch Sikh. It can be readily seen that the foundations of these innovations, apart from their own intrinsic merit or demerit, themselves constitute a heresy such as has always been impermissible in the Sikh discipline, for the Guru alone has the competence to do so and no individual, howsoever prestigious and charismatic, may do so.

6. These impugned innovations are two in number, one, a 'do' and the other, a 'don't.'

7. Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh and his admirers claim and assert that the five *k's* obligatory for an *amritdhārī* baptised Sikh, a *Singh* include a *kesakī*, that is, a short turban for men and women, as a must and one of the other *k's*, *kanghā* (comb) is not one of the five 'do's'

8. Now, this is wholly arbitrary and schismatic, as there is no authority or sanction for it in our extant formularies, *rahit-nāmāhs*, or our pre-Randhir Singh practices. If it is arbitrary and without any authority or sanction, it is schismatic and thus, an act of sabotage against the solidarity and monolithicism of the Khalsa. The responsibility for

Note: The author seems to be misinformed. Bhai Sahib did not exclude *Kangha* from the five Ks--editors.

it squarely rests on Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh.

9. Similarly, Bhai Sahib introduced a new 'don't' into our baptismal discipline, for which there exists no authority or precedent and nor any such authority or precedent is pointed out by the late Bhai Sahib or his admirers today. This 'don't' requires that a baptised *Singh*, instead of the accepted injunction : *Thou shalt not eat kosher meat*, substitutes his own injunction : *Thou shalt not eat meat and thus remain always a strict vegetarian*. This 'don't' also constitutes a fundamental erosion of the Sikh doctrines and practices and it tends to loosen the solidarity of the collectivity of the Khalsa.

10. There is, and has been a widespread misconception about these five 'do's' and four 'don't's' of the Sikh baptismal discipline. It has been tacitly and uncritically assumed that these positive and negative injunctions are ethical in content and purpose and, as such, are a part of the Sikh moral code. This misconception has sometimes led to modifications of the original injunctions by individuals and organisations, with the laudable objective of upgrading these injunctions and imparting a higher or superior moral flavour to them. For instance, one of our indisputable baptismal 'don't's' is : "*A sex-involvement with a turkanī (a muslim woman) is forbidden.*" True, this injunction must have had a secondary purpose also of imposing a strict and high moral code of conduct on the Sikhs, when there always subsisted or existed a cold or hot war between the Sikhs and the Turks, the Mughals and their co-religionists, the Muslims in India. But its primary significance and purpose, in conjunction with the other three 'don't's', was to formulate a psychological schemata that would generate a strong sense of cohesiveness and mutual belonging amongst the members of the Khalsa, recruited from amongst peoples and classes of different social, ethnic and even national origins, through a spiritual taboo. A spiritual taboo is *not* an ethical commandment, nor a utilitarian injunction: it is an apparently trivial, devoid of abiding relevance, but psychically profound mechanism capable of operating on the collective sub-conscious level of a newly fashioned group and thus is surcharged, for its adherents, with tremendous survival-value such as no mere ethical utilitarian injunction or code is capable of forming. 'The moment it is altered or amended to make it appear as ethically higher or

a vehicle of greater utility on the rational and conscious level, it is automatically eviscerated of its tremendous and literally unlimited potency that operates on the collective sub-conscious level of the group. It is like chemicking the brown natural sugar-cane molasses into the aristocratic, sophisticated white sugar which is, to all appearance, prettier and more presentable and acceptable in a tea-party but, in fact, has been deprived completely of its health-giving and nutritious components, iron, magnesium, B-complex vitamins and other beneficial dietary elements and thus is turned more into a poison than a food. These psychological insights have become available to the modern man, only recently, through the development of Depth Psychology, though the truth was well known to our ancestors. Those well-meaning Sikhs who have changed the baptismal 'don't' : *Thou shalt not have sex-involvement with a turkani*, into *Thou shalt not have extra-marital sex relations* might have succeeded in transforming the original injunction into a more acceptable and respectable code of social conduct, but they have, without a doubt, robbed the original injunction of its great daemonic power, to the detriment of the Khalsa, as a consequence of its loss of competence to forge and sustain the cohesiveness of the Khalsa, without which cohesiveness the Khalsa simply cannot function properly to insert itself into the current of human History, and thus making an impact on the mainstream of History. Through this and such other deviations introduced into the original, pristine baptismal discipline of the Khalsa a blooming flower has been you might say, chopped off its parent plant to be thrust into a painted flower vase to decorate a drawing room of a parasitic dilettante.

11. The baptismal 'do's' and 'don'ts' of our religion are not ethical or utilitarian principles like certain commandments of Semitic religions. Their essential function is to create a collective will and Conscience in the mass, originally gathered from heteronomous social bases. Their potency is not rooted in the rational sphere or social ethics; their power is daemonic and pertains to the collective sub-conscious sphere, and the moment they are dismantled and denigrated to the domain of rationality and relativistic conventional ethical directives they are deprived of their ultra-rational daemonic power, and with such meddling with their synthetic conglomeration, it might gain in rational acceptability but it loses its soul, its *prāṇśakti* (a concept untranslatable into non-Sanskrit seman-

tic systems). The verdict of History is that, disintegrated and dismantled taboo-complexes have never again become re-charged with their original power amongst a people who have themselves dismantled these taboo-complexes.

12. Any change in or re-interpretation of the original *bajjar kurahit* of Sikh baptism is a grave heresy inimical to the basic and ultimate interests of Sikhism and the *Panth* surcharged with their mystical power cannot sustain itself for long unless immutability of its pristine taboos, socially harmless rules relating to eating and drinking, purity and impurity, and cultural prohibitions, is jealously guarded and preserved as an irreplaceable guarantee of its vitality and for its life-value, in as much as it tends to give a heterogenous society a specific inwardness and, further, secures that external and internal unity and uniformity which counteracts the forces of heterogeneity ever latent in a group of composite character, such as the Khalsa is. The *Namadhārī* fissiparism opening up ridiculous prospects of an infinite series of Sikh Gurus and denigration of the Guru Granth, the original *Nirankari* movement of Baba Dayal of Rawalpindi, who, in their excessive puritanic zeal, substituted *pritham satināmu simr ke*, for Guru Gobind Singh's *pritham bhagauti simr ke*, in the Sikh Congregational Prayer, in the absence of a proper understanding of the original phrase and thus paving the way for emergence of *neo-Nirankarīs* of Sri Avtar Singh with their doctrine of 'eat, drink and be merry, without any moral judgements or censor being there', and the *Rādhāsoāmīs* of Beas who started with preaching the Sikh way of life through a specially qualified *amritdhārī*, Baba Sawan Singh, slowly and imperceptibly degenerating into a self-sufficient spiritual caucus to the great loss of the Khalsa, are instances in point, illustrative of the grave dangers that lurk concealed in all such adventures of clever and not-so-clever meddlings with the original and time honoured edifice of Sikhism.

13. What is the matrix of the undeniable daemonic power of the taboos and symbols in religion is, as yet, a rather obscure subject but certain insights gained by the modern man, through speculations on Depth Psychology, have made explicit the relevancy of what has been said above. There is no doubt that the Guru, who originally gave these taboo-complexes, was not only fully aware of their significance but was

also competent to impose them upon the Khalsa. Any meddling with them by individuals constitutes a sin against the Holy Ghost, so to speak, and it demonstrably constitutes a grave disservice and damage to the cause of Sikhism and to the *Panth*.

14. No doubt, this is the real import of the Guru's declaration that 'the real value inheres in the rules and not in the follower of the rules' : *rahit piārī mohi kau sikh piārā nāhi*.¹ The rules, *rahit*, fashion sustain the collective Personality of the Khalsa while an individual Sikh, disregardful of the rules, is a segregated, chaotic floatsam.

15. Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh, therefore, is shown as not well-advised in having promulgated that *kesaki*, the mini-turban for men and women, is one of the five baptismal *k's* of Sikhism and that *kanghā*, the comb, is not so. The admirers and followers of the Bhai Sahib are, also ill-advised in accepting and practising this amendment.

16. Now may be examined the Bhai Sahib's other intrusion into the well established and basic baptismal prohibitions and vows. One of the stringent and draconian Sikh baptismal injunction is : *Thou shalt not consume kosher meat, kutḥā*. The Bhai Sahib has substituted in its place, his own commandment : *Thou shalt not eat animal food*, i.e. meat, thus obliging a baptised Sikh to accept vegetarianism as a religious creed.

17. That the Gurus, the Sikh Prophets were, all of them, with only one exception, meat-eaters is a historical fact. History tells us that the Third Nanak, Guru Amar Dass, ate nothing but boiled and unseasoned vegetable leaves through personal choice and individual preference but took his meals in the common kitchen, alongwith every one else, and in the common kitchen there was no prohibition against cooking of or eating of meat. It was, for the first time, in the times of the Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan that cooking of vegetarian food only in the common kitchen became the established practice that continues till today. This change in the menu was considered desirable when certain learned Brahmins from Varanasi visited the Guru at Amritsar and stayed there for many months to exegetise on and explain the various *Upanisadic* texts to the Sikh congregation. Since these Brahmin-guests were to eat in the common-kitchen, due

1. ਰਹਿਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਮੋਹਿ ਕਉ ਸਿਖ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਨਹਿ॥

consideration was shown to their prejudice against animal food and this change in the Sikh menu continues till today as a measure of accommodation of and consideration for the sentiments of vegetarians who might visit the Sikh temples or join the congregations of the Sikhs. The identical rule regarding a vegetarian menu also obtains, for the last many centuries, at the world famous mussoleum of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti at Ajmer, and for identical reasons. It does not show that Chisti Muslim *sufis* are vegetarians by religious conviction or even practice; it just shows reasonable accommodation to the sentiments of guests. The writer of these lines, during the British regime in India, worked as the Head of various districts in the Punjab in which capacity he hosted three or four times the British Governors at his house. Invariably, on such occasions, the British Governors and their wives, their aides and other European guests, *suo-moto* refrained from smoking after dinner, despite after-dinner smoking being a compulsive addiction with high class Europeans, as a concession to well known Sikh orthodoxy of their host. But this does not show that these European dignitaries were non-smokers or were against the use of tobacco, on principle.

18. There is, for a certainty, no religious prohibition against meat-eating in Sikhism and to clamp vegetarianism as a baptismal commandment on Sikhs, by any individual or group, is simply a gross heresy and an impertinence.

19. Two arguments are advanced in support of strict vegetarianism in the Hindu climate of our country, behind which some Sikhs take shelter while demanding vegetarianism as a religious principle in the Sikh way of life. One is that, meat-eating involves extreme form of *himsā* and is thus a sin intrinsically. Two, that meat-eating gives rise to deterioration or pollution of finer mental susceptibilities of the meat-eater, thus jeopardising a Sikh meat-eating aspirant's chances of steady spiritual growth through *nām-simrān*. Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh relied exclusively on the second argument, fortifying its validity with his personal authority. Meat-eating is bad for a Sikh because the Bhai Sahib knew it, through his personal experience, that it is obstructive of an individual's spiritual growth through *nām-simrān*. Students of Logic know that it is a well-known fallacy known as *argumentum vericundiam*, 'appeal to authority'. Gautam, the Buddha well knew the dangerous pitfalls to which employ-

ment of this fallacy leads. In the *sikṣāsamuḍcya* † the Buddhist pious text, the Buddha sternly warns his followers not to accept any, so called truth, simply on the basis of 'authority', on 'the ground that the Buddha says so': *maduḍḍo na tu gaurvāt*.² Guru Nanak, in the concluding stair of the *Japu* enjoins the seeking of truth through personal discipline and experience. But this might not be deemed a conclusive argument against, what Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh has asserted about, the strict requirement of vegetarianism from a baptised member of the Khalsa unless there is a superior authority against the incomparable Bhai Sahib's assertion.

20. But let us consider first the first argument, namely, that meat-eating constitutes a sin in the religious sense. In the Guru Granth, Guru Nanak himself has furnished us with a categorical and conclusive authority as to what the precise Sikh doctrine on this subject is. The Sikh scripture says, in a most forthright manner, that 'those who raise the question of meat-eating being *per se* sinful are just confused fools: *mās[u] mās[u] kar[i] mūrakh[u] jhagade giān[u] dhiān[u] nahi jānai*.³ The clear, scientific truth is then adduced that, 'there is no recognisable line of demarcation and fission between the animal and non-animal life', and that, therefore, 'the contention of sin inhering in life-taking is misconceived'; *kaṁ[u] mās[u] kaṁ[u] sāg[u] kahāvai kis[u] mah[i] pāp samāne*.⁴ It is clear, therefore, that it is not the Sikh doctrine that meat-eating is *per se* sinful; Sikhism is not a religion of confusion and tomfoolery. Vegetarianism, therefore, must not be clamped on a Sikh in the form of a baptismal vow.

21. The other argument that meat-eating has a deleterious effect on the finer side of human mind, has a hoary origin in the history of Hindu thought. The *Chhandogyaupanisad* declares that 'mind consists of food': *annamayam hi somya manah*.⁵ In the *Bhagvadgita*, human food is referred to as corresponding to the three *Samkhya* substance-modalities,

2. "मदूढाचो न तु गौरवात्—।"

3. ਮਾਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਝਗੜੇ, ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ।

Malar, M1, AG, 1289.

4. ਕਉਣੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਾਗੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪੁ ਸਮਾਣੈ॥

Ibid.

5. "अन्नमयं हि सोम्य मनः"—छन्दोग्योपनिषद्—(6.5.4)

triguna-sattava, rajas and *tamas*, a schemata laid down in the *Chhandogya* itself. According to this categorisation, meat-dishes, somehow, do not appear to fit in with the *sattava*, the superior-most category of food described in the *Bhagvadgita*, and thus, by implication, it is forbidden to a spiritual aspirant. *Manusmriti*, however, is more explicit and earthy in declaring that "no blame attaches to wine-drinking and meat-eating or sex-experience" : *na māns abhakshane doṣah na madhaye na śa maithune*.⁶ In the *Guru Granth*, however, the question has been clearly and conclusively dealt with and inflexible injunctions are purposely avouced: *bābā hor[u] khāṇā khusī khuār, jit[u] khādhai tan[u] pidṭyai, man mahi 'chale vikar'*⁷ : 'To eat simply to cater to the pleasures of the palate, without making sure whether a particular food has good or bad effects on the mind or body, is stupidity.' The test is not whether a food is meat or vegetable or cereal. The true and sensible test is, whether a particular food is good or bad for a particular individual's body and mind. In the Sikh doctrine, therefore, there is no religious injunction for or against meat-eating; it is a matter for individual choice and discretion, a most sensible principle. Even vegetarian food and fruitarian and *sattavic* diet might be harmful for mind or body in certain cases and, therefore, the Sikh scripture enjoins careful and pragmatic guidelines in each individual case. There is no inflexible, draconian law in Sikhism in the matters of food. *kiā mevā kiā ghio gud mitthā kiā maidā kiā mās, nānak saćce nām vinu sabhai tol vinas*.⁸ 'Neither fruits, nor butter-fat, nor jaggery, nor sweets, nor pasteries, nor meat are to be deemed as intrinsically desirable, unless they lead to a disposition and foster a capacity for remembrance of God.' The prevalent notion that vegetarian food naturally engenders a superior and more sensitive mind while meat-eating coarsens and spiritually degenerates it is wholly mistaken. Hitler, a monster of History, was a strict vegetarian. Diwan Lakhpat of Sikh history who conceived of and carried out a cruel Sikh genocide plan, in the middle of the eighteenth century was a strict vegetarian. Jesus the Christ, prophet of love and compassio

6. "न मांसभक्षणं दोषः न मद्ये न च मैथुने।"

मनुस्मृति-(5.56.)

7. ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ॥

ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਧੈ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰੁ॥

Sri Rag, M1, AG, 16

8. ਕਿਆ ਮੇਵਾ ਕਿਆ ਘਿਉ ਗੁੜੁ ਮਿਠਾ ਕਿਆ ਮੈਦਾ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਸੁ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਭੇ ਟੋਲ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ॥

Majh, Var, M1, AG, 142

was a non-vegetarian. Gautam, the Buddha, the apostle of *ahiṃsā parmodharmā*, ate meat as his last meal, bacon-candy, *madhusukra*.

22. In the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Sikh sovereignty was usurped by the Britishers and Sikh spiritual dignity, their self-confidence and the Sikh psyche was humbled and was marked by a feeling of contrition and defeat, they accepted British moral and cultural superiority. They, like their non-Sikh countrymen, began seeing themselves through European eyes and measuring themselves by the values of the noisy, powerful and superficial Industrial Revolution. The Sikhs became severed from their roots, became a floatsam, and lost their spiritual vitality.

23. It was in this climate that the *Singh Sabha* movement arose, to extricate Sikhism from the omnivorous tentacles of a hostile, sinister octopus of Brahmanism and to make Sikhism acceptable to the materialistic rationality that oriented European mind. It would take another hundred years almost before the European mind itself would free itself from the tentacles of pure rationality and its pretensions to be an unfailing guide to true understanding. That the human intellect, unguided and operating on its own fulcrum, is a trickster, a hireling of the individual's hidden emotional complexes and by and large, the devil's advocate where the ultimate questions are involved, was dimly perceived by the European mind only during the interregnum between the two World Wars, through acceptance of Depth Psychology as a genuine scientific discipline. Our ancestors the *rishis* and wise men, had always known the truth of the matter and the *Upanisadic* dictum tells us that where ultimate questions are involved, unguided reason is a counterfeit coin, capable of purchasing no genuine commodities, *nāyamātmā pravācaneṇ labhyo*⁹ the price for which latter must be paid through "cryptic words, crooked speech": *vakrokti kamahi dāvah*. In the *Guru Granth*, at more than one places, we are admonished that 'intellect and its tool, reason, a function of the human mind, leads to obfuscation and confusion unbounded': *duje bahaute rāh man kia matti(ñ) khindia(ñ), bahut[u] pae asgāh gote khahi(ñ) na nikalahi*.¹⁰ Intellect acting as reason is like an inebriated elephant wandering in pathless woods and is incapable of finding its way about without the

9. "नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो।"

10. ਦੂਜੇ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਰਾਹ ਮਨ ਕੀਆ ਮਤੀ ਖਿੰਡੀਆ॥
ਬਹੁਤੁ ਪੈਏ ਅਸਗਾਹ ਗੋਤੇ ਖਾਹਿ ਨ ਨਿਕਲਹਿ॥

Guru's guidance available in the Guru's word *man kunchar(u) kãĩã udiane gur kã sabad ankus nisane*¹¹ Before we thus lost our spiritual moorings and the enduring foundations of our faith, we had the Guru's baptismal injunctions and guide-lines of conduct, *rahit-namas* as well as the clear light of the Guru's Word to sustain us. We then became a prey to the confusion and superficiality that characterised European values of Industrial Revolution, in so far as they purported to be the final yardsticks of all aspects of Reality. We adopted a course of modifications and alterations in the Guru's injunctions and guidelines with the aid of our punny intellect and counterfeit reason, and the cliches borrowed uncritically from our political masters.

24. This is the background of the heresies and deviations, re-interpretations and certain modalities which we, the Sikhs, have adopted during the last one hundred years, and this is the soil in which the heresies of Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh are rooted.

25. When the writer of these lines was studying philosophy at Cambridge in England at the feet of such world-famous philosophers as Professor Moore, Dr. C. D. Broad and Wittsgentein during the thirties of this century, Dr. Broad one day casually observed to him : "How do you explain the intriguing phenomenon of India, in particular and the East in general, whole heartedly and uncritically accepting and holding fast to philosophical dogmas and values about half a century after the West has finally rejected and discarded such views and values". My prompt reply was : "Sir, it would take about that much time for a cripple to crawl by the land route from Marseilles to Delhi." The great Professor did not treat my apparently flippant reply as a joke; it seemed to please him.

26. The study of Physical Sciences through Inductive experimentation, on the basis of quantitative categories, had led to singular success and power for the Europeans giving them vast political supremacy over the East. The West fell a victim to the illusion of mistake that Inductive experimentation and the quantitative categories covered every conceivable aspect of Reality and that anything which claimed to lie outside these

11. (ੳ) ਮਨੁ ਕੁੰਚਰੁ ਕਾਇਆ ਉਦਿਆਨੈ॥

ਗੁਰੁ ਅੰਕਸੁ ਸਬੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਨੀਸਾਨੈ॥

(ਅ) ਕੜੀਅਲੁ ਮੁਖੇ ਗੁਰਿ ਅੰਕਸੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਰਾਮ॥

ਮਨੁ ਮੈਗਲੁ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦਿ ਵਸਿ ਆਇਆ ਰਾਮ॥

Gauri M1, AG., 221.

Vadhans, M4, AG, 576.

grandios demarcations was simply secondary, derivative and subjective speculation and fanciful stuff and, therefore, of no abiding significance or of much interest to a serious, mature mind. As a consequence, Religion, Aesthetics, Music, Poetry and many other aspects of Reality were rendered as 'rejects' in the showroom of the intellectual and the learned. Those who would offer these goods for sale in the market of, what was presumptuously claimed as 'Scientific Thought' must first tailor their wares to the specifications already laid down.

27. That is how the malaise of crippling and misshaping of the structure of Religion and particular disciplines of organised religions originated throughout the modern world. This climate and mental malaise has fathered the heresies of Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh and similar other distortions in our current understanding of Sikhism.

28. The European mind, however, has now awakened to new and different insights.

29. Professor Eddington in his *Science and the Unseen World* tell us,

The environment of space and time and matter, of light and colour and concrete things, which seems so vividly real to us, has been probed deeply by every device of Physical Science, and at the bottom, we reach symbols. Its substance has melted into shadows. Nevertheless, it remains a real world if there is a background to the symbols--an unknown quantity which the mathematical symbol 'stands' for. We think, we are not wholly cut-off from that background. It is to this background that our personality and consciousness belong and those spiritual aspects of our nature are not to be described by any symbolism.

30. Those who venture to meddle with and cannibalise the foundational steel frame of the symbols and taboo-complexes of our baptismal discipline, a discipline firmly rooted in the spontaneous vision of Guru Gobind Singh, the demiurge of the Khalsa, commit the unpardonable crime of vandalism, little knowing that our 'do's' and 'don'ts' were not evolved through ratiocination by the Guru as they came out full fledged and complete, out of the *spontaneous vision*, vouchsafed by the God Almighty of the Guru : *gurbara kāl ke hukam sio upajiyo bikyānā, tab*

*sahaje rachio khālsā sābat-mardānā.*¹²

31. These observations apply not only to the two heresies of Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh pertaining to his heresy of *kesaki* and dogma of vegetarianism in relation to the Sikh baptismal 'do's' and 'don'ts', but they apply with equal cogency to those who insist on an infinite, unbroken series of the Sikh prophets, those who have created, through the majority vote of a statutory Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, fifth *Takht*, those who substitute the *mantra* of *Radhasoami* for *Waheguru*, those who replace *bhagauti* by *satinamu* in our congregational prayer, those who try to substitute the Sikh Commandment of our baptismal discipline, *Thou shalt absolutely refrain from indulgence in tobacco*, with their self-tailored injunction; *Thou shalt never use any intoxicants or psychedelics under any circumstances whatever*, or more specifically : *Thou shalt not consume alcoholic drinks*, and those who insist that for the baptismal vow : *Thou shalt not enter into sex-involvement with a turkanī*, whatever, the word, *turkanī* might mean here, a 'Turkish woman', a Muslim woman, or a 'free-love woman, all these and all those others who fancy themselves to be clever or are bitten by the bug of innovativeness, are demonstrably not being churlish, that is supporters and sympathisers of Sikhism, but they are being just churlish, surely and ungracious towards the faith of their fathers.

32. Apart from these two heresies for which Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh has been castigated here, he has also laid singular and conspicuous stress on *kirtan*, a cardinal doctrine of Sikhism.

33. That singing of praises of God is highly acceptable to God is clearly hinted at in the ancient Samskrit text, *Narad-smṛiti*, where it is laid by the supreme god, Vishnu, that "I reside wherever my devotees sing my prāsies": *me bhaktah yatra gayanti tatra nishthomi naradah.*¹³ Hymn-singing is a prominent practice in Christianity and *bhajan*, *samkirtan*, is an approved form of worship in Vaishnava Hinduism. In Islam, however, the position is somewhat different. Controversy has raged from the first century of Islam, (7th.C.) till today as to whether music is permissible at all in religion. There is no specific prohibition against music in the *Quran*

12. ਗੁਰਬਰ ਕਾਲ ਕੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਸਿਉ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਬਿਕਯਾਨ॥

ਉਥ ਸਹਜੇ ਰਚਿਓ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਾਬਤ ਮਰਦਾਨ॥

13. "मे भक्ताः यत्र गायन्ति तत्र तिष्ठामि नारद।" (नारदस्मृति—)

itself, the primary source of Islamic religion and law, but *hadith*, the traditions about the words and deeds of Mohammed, is often pressed into service of this controversy. The Sufis, the mystics, hold music in the highest esteem and have made it an essential element in their *dhikr*, ceremonies. Closely allied to the Sufi movement, there is a genere of Islamic literature, called, *sama* ('listening') which, for the most part, favours music. This practice of *dhikr* conjoined with *sama* has earned unqualified approval in the Guru Granth: *nao lain[i] ar[u] karan[i] Samāi nānak[u] tin[i] balihārai jāi*¹³. The religious grounds on which music has specifically approved or condemned relate to the chanting of the *Quran*, call to the prayers, *adhān*, and a few hymns for special occasions and holy days and this controversy, debate and diatribe is still alive today. Music as such, however, forms an integral part of secular Islamic culture and the greatest Muslim theorist on Musicology, Al-Farabi, (d. 950 A.D.) who wrote his authoritative treatise in Arabic, *Kitb al Musiqi al-kabir* is still regarded significantly relevant. But as far as the significance and place of music in religion is concerned, the strict orthodox disapproval of Muslim theologians is largely represented by Sir Mohammad Iqbal, in his *Armaghani-Hejaz*, where he makes a delegate to the Grand Convention, convened by the Satan to review 'the State of Affairs in the God's world', refer to religious music, *qawwālī*, an artifice of the Satan's deputies having become well-entrenched amongst Muslims in the East. The Satan thereupon approvingly remarks: "Well-done. The temperament of the East is eminently suitable for this opiate. Otherwise, they might have opted for the Exegetics of the *Quran*."¹⁵

34. In Hinduism music is accepted and approved in its major sector of worship. In Christianity, it occupies a prominent place in worship. In Islam, it has a somewhat precarious perch as an orthodox religious practice. In Sikhism, however, (1) *Kirtan* is declared as the mainstream of Sikh-worship. *kīrtan nirmolak hīrā*,¹⁶ 'praises of God sung in music is a rare gem', is stated in the Sikh scripture. (2) "Singing the praises of God

14. ਨਾਉ ਲੈਨਿ ਅਰੁ ਕਰਨਿ ਸਮਾਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਨ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੈ ਜਾਇ॥

Slok M1, AG, 1420.

15. *taba'i mashriq ke lie mauzūn yaht afiun thi,*
varneh qawwālī se kuchh kam to nahin ilam-al-kalām

16. ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਨਿਰਮੋਲਕ ਹੀਰਾ॥

Slok M1, AG, 893.

is the central secret revealed to the deserving aspirant". *bhae diāl kirpal sant jan eh bāt batāi, sra-dharam mano tih kie jini hari kirat gai*,¹⁷ says the Guru Granth. (3) "O, my God, save me from the baneful influences of the art-music, sensual and passionate secular music, titilating, dilettantish : *"mere mohan sravanī ih na suṇāe, sākat gīt nād dhun[i] gāvat bolat bol ājāi*",¹⁸ is also a Sikh sacred text. (4) "The test of permissible music in Sikhism is as to whether it encourages equipoise of inverted mind' : *rāg nād sabad[i] sohaṇe jā lāgai sahaj[i] dhian[u]*".¹⁹

35. These are the four basic ingredients specified in the Guru Granth which would qualify a musical piece as constituting the central mode of Sikh-worship : (a) It must be related to God, His attributes and praises, (b) It must not be sensuous and passion-generating through its musical modality or verbal content. "A song or musical modality that disperses mind away from God, is treachery to religion, replete with pain and sorrow" : *rāg[i] nādī nian[u] duje bhāe, antar[i] kapaṭ[u] mahā dukh[ā] pāe*,²⁰ (c) It must remain within the traditional confines of its verbal content, which is, the sacred texts of the Guru Granth, the pious compositions of Bhai Gurdas an approved apostle of Sikhism and the devotional Persian hymnal songs of Bhai Nand Lal, Goya, a dear, close associate and Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh; (d) It must satisfy the over-all test of leading the mind inwards. As a corollary of this last-mentioned ingredient, the Guru has himself notified the precise musical mode, *rag*, with its subsidiary, of the classifical Hindu *sastriya-sangeet* in which each text of the Guru Granth is to be musically rendered. "Sing God's praises through the excellent peerless system of musicology and approved melodies" : *gun govind gāvah[u] sabh[i] har[i]jan rāg ratan rasnā alāp*²¹

17. ਭਏ ਦਇਆਲ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲ ਸੰਤ ਜਨ ਤਬ ਦੇਹ ਬਾਤ ਬਤਾਈ॥
ਸਰਬ ਧਰਮ ਮਾਨੇ ਤਿਹ ਕੀਏ ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਗਾਈ॥

Ramkali, M9, AG, 902.

18. ਮੇਰੇ ਮੋਹਨ ਸ੍ਵਣੀ ਇਹ ਨ ਸੁਨਾਏ॥
ਸਾਕਤ ਗੀਤ ਨਾਦ ਧੁਨਿ ਗਾਵਤ ਬੋਲਤ ਬੋਲ ਅਜਾਏ॥

Bilawal, M5, AG, 820.

19. ਰਾਗ ਨਾਦ ਸਬਦਿ ਸੋਹਣੇ ਜਾ ਲਾਗੈ ਸਹਜਿ ਧਿਆਨੁ॥

Bilawal, Var. M4, AG, 849.

20. ਰਾਗਿ ਨਾਦਿ ਮਨੁ ਦੂਜੈ ਭਾਇ॥
ਅੰਤਰਿ ਕਪਟੁ ਮਹਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇ॥

Parbhathi Rag M1, AG, 1342.

21. ਗੁਣ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਸਭਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਰਾਗ ਰਤਨ ਰਸਨਾ ਆਲਪ॥

Bilawal Rag M5, AG, 82f.

36. It is this *kirtan*, the musical mode of worship, that has been accorded a central place in Sikh-worship and it is this mode of worship that is almost exclusively employed in the Sikh *sanctum sanctorum* of the Golden Temple at Amritsar. For, "the music and melody constitute the aid and catalyst to help man ascend into attunement with the Infinite, though the *numenous* experience itself is beyond the reach of music : *rāgai nādai bāhara inin hukam[u] na bujhiā jāi*.²²" The Entrance-door of the God's Palace is attended by myriads of modes of music and by myriads of human and divine musicians", says the famous *Stair of the Japu, Sodaru*. "The *kirtan* has the potency to rescue man from the clutches of Time" : *jo jan[u] karai kīrtan[u] gopāl, tis[u] kau poh[i] na sakai jamkāl*.²³ "God (sometimes) enters human experience in the form of music" : *nāmo rāg rūp*. It is this *kirtan* on which Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh laid renewed stress and which he regenerated with a fresh vigour and vitality amongst the Sikh congregations with the result that the admirers of the Bhai Sahib have imparted now a kind of institutional continuity to it, with much success.

37. Great credit is due to Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh for rendering this service to the cause of Sikhism, by quickening a religious impulse in the community that was slowly falling into desuetude.

38. But what does the Sikh doctrine on *kirtan* mean in the terms of modern idiom? This is an interesting and intricate question.

39. Edmund Gurney in his voluminous book, *The Power of Sound*, tells us that music is non-illustrative, that it is a perfect motion and that it is apprehended by a peculiar, isolated faculty of mind, the musical faculty. It is non-illustrative because it is not primarily intended to express external objects and it affords a delight, *rasa*, which springs from the musical faculty's perception of the ideal, perfect motion. The uniqueness and isolation of musical experience is such that they cannot be either interpreted or described. Poets, painters and sculptors make reference to an external world; they may express ideas which can be interpreted and

22. ਰਾਗੈ ਨਾਦੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਇਨੀ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਬੁਝਿਆ ਜਾਇ॥

Sloka M1, AG, 1423.

23. ਜੈ ਜਨੁ ਕਰੈ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗੋਪਾਲ॥
ਤਿਸੁ ਕਉ ਪੋਹਿ ਨ ਸਕੈ ਜਮਕਾਲ॥

Gaund, M5, AG, 867.

situations that may be described, but a sequence of musical sounds has no reference to anything except the peculiar, unique, subjective experience of music. We say, this music is good and that music, bad; but in so saying we make no reference to any external object or idea and our reference is simply and exclusively to our approval or otherwise of it by our musical faculty, or 'the ear for music', as we say, in our own language. The emotions, the *rasa*, which true music excites in us has no kinship whatever with any extra-musical emotion or extra musical experience and this *rasa* cannot be aroused by something other than music. The *rasa of the sangeetaloka*, 'the World of Music', therefore, must not be confused with the 'nine literary tastes', the *nava-rasa*, of literature of Indian tradition. Anandavardhan (9th C.) in his famous *locus classicus*, *Dhyanyaloka*, deals with the aesthetic significance of words and their undertones as excitors of aesthetic experience, but music in isolation, cannot be subsumed under the traditional schemata of *nava-rasa* unless a postulate of Indian approach to Reality is taken into account. This postulate is that, Reality can best be understood in the realm of ideas, rather than in the world of objects, in the abstract, rather than in the concrete. The peculiar Indian practice of weaving music and painting into a creative pattern of aesthetic harmony is illustrative of this postulate. Each painting is an interpretation, in form and colour, of a particular *raga* or *ragini*, a musical mode or its sub-modality. So, on listening to *raga*, one may visualise a particular painting.

40. This might furnish us with an insight into the true significance of the Sikh *Kirtan*, a seeming symbiosis of musical experience with the revealed Word of the Guru, facilitating contact with the *noumenous* experience, the experience of the Holy. "He who sings and he who hears the disciplined singing of God's praises, his nescience disappears" : *jo jo kathai sunai har[i] kīrtan[u] tā kī durmat[i] nas*.²⁴ The *noumenous* experience of 'the Holy' and the unique 'musical experience' cannot be fused into one another to the loss of their individual, unique identities, but they, both of them when properly coalesced through a prescribed musical modality, inherent in the Hindu '*sastrīya-sangeet*' and the revealed Word of the Guru or its pious adjuncts, they facilitate, and eventually lead to,

24. ਜੋ ਜੋ ਕਥੈ ਸੁਨੈ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਤਾ ਕੀ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਨਾਸ॥

Kāṅra, M5, AG, 1300.

an access into the realms of the *noumenous* 'Holy'. This would seem to be the Sikh doctrine of *kirian* to which a place of centrality has been accorded in the Sikh vision of man and God, and their inter-relationship.

41. Gurney, in his theory of Music, has concluded that music does depict extramusical ideas and feelings at all. This conclusion seems to rest on an assumption, which may or may not be valid or self-evident. If we cannot, through, verbal expressions, assign 'names' to musical states, does it necessarily follow that musical states are unique ? After all, language is a strictly limited, essentially pragmatic tool and it is hopelessly poor in names for subjective states. The number of subjective states a man may experience is almost infinite. Not only music, but landscape, poetry, an omnibus ride, leave alone excursions into the mystical layers of the mind, can evoke countless experiences for which there are no names. About the state of *noumenous* experience, again and again we come across such expressions in the Guru Granth : *kahina kathan na jai*, 'it is unsayable', *je ko khāik[u] ākhan[i] pāi ohu jāpai jettā(ñ) mu(ñ)h[i] khāi*,²⁵ the dare-devil who would venture to say the-unsayable, shall end in bitter failure and frustrations'. The effect of a poem can no more be described than can the effect of a musical performance. To experience a poem, it must be read, and likewise, to experience a musical composition, it must be heard. Poetic language expresses states for which language has no names except vague, portmanteau words, such as, 'joy', 'triumph' etc. Sir Mohanmmad Iqbal has well said : "This is the whole truth about poetry and philosophy, an attempt to say that which cannot be said".²⁶ It is true, a poem makes external references but these references do not constitute the *meanings* of the poem. That meaning is to be found in the subjective states that the poem evokes and communicates. Poetry cannot be paraphrased any more than music, but this does not implicate a unique and isolated 'poetic faculty', as Gurney concludes in respect of 'musical faculty'. Just as poetical states cannot be said to be isolated and unique on the simple ground that they are not strictly amenable to a verbal

25. ਜੇ ਕੋ ਖਾਇਕੁ ਆਖਣਿ ਯਾਇ॥
ਓਹੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਜੇਤੀਆ ਮੁਹਿ ਖਾਇ॥

Japu, M1, AG, 5.

26. *Falsfā-o-shi'r ki aur haqiqat hai kiā,*
harfe tammana jise kaih na saken rūbrū

paraphrase, it cannot be argued, in the case of the music that, its experience is isolated and without reference to anything else, unique.

42. The Sikh vision of Man and God and their interrelationship and the Sikh know-how about a genuine symbiosis between the musical state evoked by and yoked to the revealed Word of the Guru, clearly suggest that both, the musical experience and the *noumenous* experience, might be the synthetic quintessential of the whole spiritual nature and make up of man. The arousal and development of this entire spiritual make-up is facilitated and quickened through the Sikh form of *kirtan*. The *kirtan*, therefore, is most efficacious as well as easily available to the common man, for his progress towards the *summum bonum*, nearness to God. For this reason, *kirtan* is declared in Sikhism as a most desirable and central mode of worship; *kal[i]juga mai(n) kirtan[u] pardhānā*.²⁷

43. Great credit is due to Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh for sensing this mystery correctly, for practising it un-servingly and for popularising it amongst aspirants with a perseverance: that has imparted to it an urge for continuity.

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27. ਕਲਿਜੁਗ ਮਹਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਪਰਧਾਨਾ

THE TRIBUNE AND THE SIKH IMPULSE

The centenary of the daily "Tribune" projects three imageable concepts on to the mental screen of its well informed readers, the Punjab as its fixed and permanent habitat, Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia as its donor and founder, and "Brahmo-samaj principles" that its founder willed must guide its aims and direct its policies.

It is common knowledge that Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia founded the "Tribune", provided it with a firm and sound financial base and "willed" that it must be stationed and rooted in the Punjab, the Sikh Punjab captured and annexed less than three decades earlier, by the British intruders who overwhelmed the entire Indian subcontinent and paralysed and froze its natural political growth and evolution, that was exhibiting and stabilising definitive outlines and form, since the collapse of the Mughal empire after the death of Aurangzib (A.D. 1707). He further directed that the policy and the aims of this paper must be guided by the principles enunciated by 'the founder of Indian modernism' and the Brahmo-samaj movement, Raja Ram Mohan Roy (A.D. 1772-1833). The modern outlook affirms that man is the measure of all things and envisages that all men are equal and that one is as good as another, and whatever the contextual differences, they are entitled to the same fundamental rights. In his famous 'Trust- Deed', Ram Mohan Roy tells us about the Brahmo-samaj Movement, as a focal point,

A place of public meeting of all sorts and description of people, without distinction, as shall behave and conduct themselves in an orderly and sober and religious and solemn manner for the worship and adoration of the Eternal (which incidentally is the peculiar Sikh designation of God, Akalpurkh) who is the author and preserver of the Universe, but not (emphasis added) under or by any other name, designation or title peculiarly used for and applied to any particular being or beings by any man or set of men whatsoever.

Ram Mohan Roy had become a legend in his own lifetime and we are told that when he visited England, where he breathed his last, the women "not even pausing to complete their toilet came to see him". Rabindranath Tagore has described him as "a great path-maker of this century." Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia had clearly perceived that the impulse that has given birth to modernism, the principles that must shape and guide the renaissant India and its future destiny, those that basically inspire the Brahmo-samaj movement, if not altogether identical with, are in general harmony with the fundamental principles and the true spirit of Sikhism, of which Punjab is the homeland and which spirit now must operate and manifest itself through instruments and media that the new Indian situation requires. The influence that a statesman possesses over *methods* of politics is very small and it is one of the qualities of the high grade statesman that he does not deceive himself on this matter. His task is to work in and with the historical form that he finds in existence; it is only the theorist who enthusiastically searches for more ideal forms. But to be politically correct means, necessarily, an unconditional command of the most modern means. There is no choice about it. The means and methods are premises pertaining to the time, and one who grasps the inapposite, who permits his tastes or feelings to overpower the pulse in him, loses at once his grip of realities. The danger of elitist, aristocratic, insular and segmented politics is that of being conservative in its means; the danger of unbridled democracy is the confusion of formula and form. Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia, as a representative of those who had created, and sustained the Sarkar-i-Khalsa of the sovereign Punjab was faced with this situation to manipulate which he created the "Tribune," the Dyal Singh College and the Dyal Singh Library at Lahore.

The original and true Punjab is the region between the river Oxus and the river Jamuna and historically it is the pre-British Sikh Punjab, the region between Jamrud and Jamuna, the green patch between middle Indian and Inner Asia. Throughout history it has been a meeting ground of ideas originating from Indus Valley, Gangetic Plain, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Iran, Graeco-Bactrian and Turkish Middle Asia. It is out of these impacts that the Prophetic religion of Sikhism has arisen, the only Pro-

phetic religion risen outside Palestine and Arabia, and outside the Hebrew-Judaic tradition of Christianity and Islam. This world-religion does not belong to the Hindu genus and tradition in respect of its matrix and mystic content though it purports to be of Hindu genius, as upholder of the Hindu World-view and Hindu insights into Reality. It was Sikh religion that firmly fashioned a permanent national personality which the Lahore Durbar, under Ranjeet Singh, carefully and assiduously fostered, and, thus, it inserted a new nation into the world-history, the Punjabi nation. Its growth into fullness and maturity was scotched when the Punjabi nation came into mortal claim with the British controlled peoples of Hindustan in Anglo Sikh Wars, which the contemporary Punjabi poet, Shah Mohammad, rightly describes as the *jāng hind panjab dā hon lagā*, in which clash the Punjabi valour, represented by the Khalsa Army, so badly bruised and beat the opposing armed might of Hindustan under the British nosestring that at one stage the enemy seriously contemplated "unconditional surrender", but the Punjab lost on account of traitorous generalship on the battlefield and the perfidious civil government at home. Shah Mohammad says so in so many words bitterly exposing the traitorous army leadership and the perfidious civil government at Lahore. The Sikhs then tried to retrieve the victory shamelessly turned into defeat, but failed for a variety of reasons, the Sikhs' matchless bravery, undaunted enthusiasm and high commitment notwithstanding. The Punjab was enslaved and crudely taunted and abased through the statue of General Lawrence at the Mall, Lahore: "Will you be governed by pen or sword?" Hardly a decade had passed after prostration of the Punjab, when the Sikh Kuka Movement arose in valiant protest to retrieve the lost situation but it was crushed with a heavy hand and Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia led a Sikh Deputation that assured the Lieutenant Government of Punjab that the Kuka upsurge was neither an insurgency of 'the Sikh nation', nor were all the tenets of the Kuka sect a true and orthodox form of genuine Sikhism. This event provides a revealing insight into the mind of Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia and his farseeing statesmanship. He rightly came to the conclusion that, in the changed historical situation, the Khalsa, singlehanded, could not regain the sovereignty of the Punjab and that the imperative of the mainstream of the Indian history now demanded that there must first arise,

as a pre-requisite, an Indian national consciousness, strong enough to free entire sub-continent from the foreign yoke, before the Sikh impulse can move forward. About this Sikh impulse Aurobindu Ghosh, in his *Foundations of Indian Culture* says that it is,

an astonishing original and novel creation with its face turned not to the past but to the future. A very striking instance of democratic institution contributing towards making a compact nationalism was the founding of Sikh religion.

Politics is the art by which is accomplished the history of a nation within a plurality of nations and Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia clearly saw that unless all the Indian peoples and all the Punjabis acquire a common political and national, cohesive consciousness, the Sikh impulse cannot move forward and become pervasive. It was in this context that he decided to invest his great family wealth and property resources to give the Punjab a Press-organ, a College and a Library, for propagation of news and views, for modern education and for modern knowledge. It is to the credit of the Sardar that he realised that Press tends to keep the slave-gang of its reader under the whip of its editorials and this results in expulsion of the book which compels thought to select and criticise, and he, therefore, founded the Library to cure this melody. It is known that he first tried to bring the contemporary Sikh understanding round to his views and political insights and offered to found and finance a Khalsa Daily, Dyal Singh Khalsa College and Dyal Singh Khalsa Library, with the stipulation that these institutions must be specifically oriented towards the goods that he had in mind and the objective that he believed were in true consonance with the destination to achieve which Sikhism was founded, and the Khalsa was ordained by Guru Gobind Singh. But this vision of Sardar Dyal Singh was misunderstood by his peers as too-ego-centred, a base desire to perpetuate his personal name, which desire was inconsistent with the Institutes of the Khalsa that demand merger of the individual into the mystic Collective of the Khalsa, the Panth. His offer was rejected and the Sardar, whose mind moved ahead of his times, then founded the "Tribune" along with the two other institutions, and it was thus the various Trusts that he founded were adroitly linked with "Brahmo-samaj principles" with a fascinating and clever turn of the phrase and terminology that was at once

non-communal and emodiment of the true Sikh Impulse. It is a wholly erroneous notion that Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia was either unconcerned about the destiny of the Khalsa or was indifferent to Sikhism. He died a true and devout Sikh and a confirmed nationalist and a modern man.

Gun-power and printing belong together. They are the two grand means of distance-tactics. The closing decades of Reformation in Europe witnessed the first fly-sheets and first field guns which, latter, were originally invented by the Mongols. French Revolution felt the first tempest of pamphlets of 1788 and the first mass fire of artillery at Valmy. But henceforth the printed word, capable of spreading over enormous areas, became an uncanny weapon in the hands of those who knew how to use it. During the last flickers of the *Sarkar-i-Khalsa* and going out of the lights of the sovereign Punjab, the French Revolution, from the Bastille to Waterloo, had already run its full course after setting ablaze the political awareness of well-informed man throughout the world. In 1841 the ill-fated Maharaja Sher Singh had already set up a 'Jacobin Club' at Lahore with the flaming slogan of 'Fraternity, Equality, Liberty'. The Order of the "Star of the Sovereign Punjab", *al-satāra-ī-kaukabi-Punjab* the fore-runner of our diamond-studded gold decoration, *Bharat Ratna* was already established in 1837. The Press had already come into existence in the eastern domains of the Hon'ble Company Bahadur in India when the "Tribune" was born at Lahore in 1880. "Press" became and has become the powerful Instrument of preparation and prolongation of war 'by other means'. It was this instrument that Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia provided to the Punjab in the shape of the "Tribune", to continue war finally lost in the contests of gun-power in India, by the annexation of the Punjab in 1849. "What is truth" ? asked Pontius Pilate and did not wait for a reply from Jesus, the Christ, two thousand years ago. The Press has now given the reply that for the multitude the truth is that which it continually reads and hears. The "Truth" with a capital "T", may or may not be there for most of us to discover, but the public truth of the moment which alone matters for effects and success is today a product of "the Press". What the Press wills is true. Its commanders evoke, transform, interchange truths. A few weeks of Press-work and the truth is acknowledged by everybody. Its bases are irrefutable for just so long as money

is available to maintain them intact. The magic power of the Press derives from the 'fundamental right' of 'freedom of expression'. The obverse side of this 'freedom of expression' for the Press is its prerogative to refuse to take notice of what happens here and there and what is said by this person or that. This terrible censorship of silence can condemn any truth to death by simply not undertaking its communication to the world and this self assumed prerogative is all the more potent in that the reader is absolutely unaware that it exists and freely operates.

On the occasion of the Centenary celebration of the "Tribune" it is incumbent for all concerned with this Trust, created by Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia as an act of faith, to enter upon a deep self-examination to assess as to what extent the original intentions and dreams of the great founder of the "Tribune" have been realised, and to find out whether or not there have been remissnesses and failures, tilts and stances, in pursuing aims and targets that ought to have been pursued and achieved but were not, and could not be, and whether in the changed circumstances of a partitioned India, the original intentions of its great founder call for re-orientation and fresh attitudes. The writer of these lines, who has been a constant reader of the "Tribune" for the last over fifty years, has no hesitation in heartily congratulating this great newspaper on what it has achieved and has stood for in relation to the political life of the Punjab during the last one hundred years, "our contemporary of the Rattan Chand Road" as Rudyard Kipling in the "Civil and Military Gazette" used to call it with imperious condescension, and "our Tribune", as the Punjabis have affectionately called it ever since its inception.

SIKH IDENTITY

Under a Government of Canada, subsidized cultural project, I was invited by the All Canada Sikh Federation, Vancouver, to visit North America to explain Sikh identity and to project Sikh image before opinion-forming audiences and forums here. Accordingly I arrived from India in the first week of September and have been touring about ever since, lecturing before public meetings, giving interviews to the press and appearing before television, participating in seminars and colloquiums in various universities and visiting Sikh temples and congregations.

2. Before these audiences and through these media, I have tried to communicate that,

(a) The Sikhs of India possess a distinct, well-solidified, historically recognized political identity and the status of a nation internationally recognized, even by France and England up to 1849, when their empire was merged in the British India;

(b) They were recognized as the third legitimate heir to the sovereignty of the undivided British India in 1947 by the British parliament, besides Hindus and Muslims;

(c) Before quitting India in 1947, the British carved out a Muslim country, Pakistan, for Muslims, and the Sikhs accepting solemn and definitive commitments made by Hindus to carve out and establish an autonomous Sikh area in the north of India wherein the Sikhs could become conclusively effective at the decision-making levels of the state and wherein they would live and flourish according to their own genius within the Union of India, rejected all offers of satisfactory political arrangements on behalf of the Muslims and the outgoing British;

(d) After the departure of the British, however, the unalterable majority of the Hindus of India have cynically repudiated all their solemn commitments to the Sikh people, have gathered all power in their own hands through the facade of 'one man, one vote' and a 'secular' state and

have embarked upon a long-term plan of demoralizing and degrading the Sikhs so as to submerge them into the Hindu community as its peripheral, humble and subservient component, with a view, eventually, to divest them of their cultural significance and historical potential and to deprive them, for all times, of their control of their own history.

3. For this purpose, subtle and gross, well-conceived and mis-conceived, political, cultural, economic and administrative measures have been put into operation during the last 25 years or so.

4. Even the judicial apparatus of the country has been shamelessly brought in to serve this 'Grand Design', and there are cases on record wherein relation to similar facts in all respects and the identical laws being applicable, opposite decisions have been handed out by the highest Courts in the country : in one case to refuse legal relief to a Sikh petitioner and on the other case, readily granting the legal relief to a Hindu petitioner, thus proclaiming that although all are equal before the law in India, some are more equal. In this background the only political organization of the Sikhs, the Shiromani Akali Dal, has gone on record by formally resolving on the 20th of July, 1966 that

After having carefully viewed the findings, the reports and judgments of judicial and quasi-judicial tribunals and forums that have dealt with matters and cases involving important Sikh interest, (The Shiromani Akali Dal) comes to the conclusion that the entire judicial machinery and judicial process of the Independent India ... has been perverted against the Sikh citizens of India in relation to their just and legal rights

5. Placed in this predicament, there are two demands currently being made by the Sikh: one, for a Sovereign Sikh State or a Khalistan, as an effective buffer between Paksitan and India; and, two, for setting up an autonomous area in the north and within the Union of India wherein the Sikh interests are constitutionally recognised as of special importance.

6. In my public lectures and talks, I have tried to explain dispassionately and objectively the Sikh political problem today, so that the Sikhs abroad and the international public opinion and community may take note of it.

7. Before the University forums I have explained clearly that Sikhism is an autonomous, prophetic world-religion and it is not a syncretic sect of Hinduism at all, and I have discussed and argued that the basic insights of Hindu philosophy and Hindu religious postulates to which Sikhism is the only true and legitimate heir, are capable, as transvalued by Sikhism along with the spiritual deposit of Sikhism, to afford satisfying answers and guidelines to some of the most urgent and disturbing existential problems of the modern man. During all such discussions and dialogues, in accordance with the highest traditions of European scholarship and Canadian and American rules of courtesy, my audiences have treated me with utmost generosity and unstinted praise that has been truly gratifying.

8. Currently, I am touring California on the same mission as the guest of the Central Singh Sabha Committee of North America.

(Released in San Jose, California, U.S.A., November, 22, 1974.)

ON FOUR FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES

[Back in 1968 CE, one enterprising Sikh, now known as yogi Harbhajan Singh, migrated to U.S.A. and set at up Los Angeles, California, a centre to propagate Sikhism. The organization he set up, is now known as the Khalsa Council of the Sikh Dharma and its Head Quarters as the 3 HO Foundation. The Khalsa Council there has its own constitution, four practices of which came under fire in 1978. On receiving a complaint the SGPC asked the Council to modify the said practices in accordance with the suggestions made in their letter No. 1813/7-6, dated Jan. 11, 1979. It advised them to hear the wisdom of Sirdar Kapur Singh, National Professor of Sikhism, before replying to the letter suggesting changes. Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh addressed the said Khalsa Council on April 17, 1979 at Los Angeles. Since his speech touches some vital questions concerning some fundamental Sikh doctrines it is reproduced below--editor]

Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh Addresses the Khalsa Council April 17, 1979, Los Angeles, California

Never in the history of Sikhism has it been demanded or has it been accepted by the body of the Khalsa that they should be put under police regimentation or some central authority, in control of certain individuals that should dictate to them as to how they are to behave. The only allegiance of a true Khalsa and of a true Sikh is to the doctrine and to God, to the Guru and to Truth. Guru as the harbinger of the Truth, and Truth the revelation which God has made for the benefit and guidance of mankind. Guru Gobind Singh, when he left this world said, "Henceforth the authority of the doctrine and the destiny rests with Guru Granth, and the determination of policy is with the body of the Khalsa" -- not with any centralized regimented body, but the body of the Khalsa. What is Khalsa? Guru Gobind Singh said, "Wherever five Sikhs who are fully committed to the doctrines of the Guru and who live according to the teachings of the Gurus, in their meditation concentrate on the Guru, that is the Khalsa."

Therefore, this letter which the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee has sent to you seems to have been sent under some kind of misconception. Four or five points which have been raised in it are, if I could explain it in one sentence, just a storm in a teacup. There is nothing in them.

To begin with, it is merely some kind of resolution passed by the Executive Committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), a statutory body created by a statute of a small state in India. That body has been created by a statute of a small state in India to manage the financial and secular affairs of certain Gurdwaras and historical Sikh shrines which have considerable property attached to them. That law can be changed, that law can be transgressed. How is that secular law of a small state in India binding upon you or upon me?

Therefore, to begin with, this whole letter is misconceived, and it is invalid. And the points raised in it rise out of some kind of misunderstanding.

Now the first point is, "Instead of the six *baanees* as mentioned in the constitution referred to . . ." I suppose this is in reference to the constitution of the Sikh Dharma. Well, whatever *baanees* are referred to, whether they are six or whether they are sixteen, there is no authority either in the Sikh doctrine or in the statutory body created by the Punjab Government to manage the property affairs of certain Gurdwaras, that this is against the Sikh *Rahit Maryaadaa*. If the Khalsa of America wants to decide for themselves that each member of the Khalsa of the USA should recite twenty-one *baanees* every morning, there is nobody to stop you, there is nobody to question it, and anybody who questions you will be a heretic and a fool.

The other point they have raised is, *Mool Mantra* is from "Ek Ongkar" upto "Gur prasaad" only. I do not know what *Mool Mantra* you have adopted, because I have not seen your constitution. Well, the position is as follows. *Mool Mantra* literally means "the rootal instrument of mind." "*Mool*" is root in Sanskrit; "*Mantra*" is "the instrument of mind." "The rootal instrument of mind." This is what it literally means. And there is a long-standing cultural tradition

in the long, profound history of Indian religions and schools of philosophy, that every religion and every school of thought, whenever it gives an exposition of its doctrines and tenets, it first of all states what is called *Mool Mantra*. It says, "This is our total view of the Ultimate Reality." It is only from such a postulate that further principles can follow logically. Unless there's a starting point, you cannot make a start. Therefore, every *sampradaaye*, every religion, and every school of philosophy must have a *Mool Mantra*. There is a *Mool Mantra* in Sikhism also. It is given in the very opening lines of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. And it has been made quite clear and explicit there, where the *Mool Mantra* starts and where it ends. It starts from *Ek Ong-kar Sat Nam Kartaa Purakh Nirbhao Nirvair Akaal Moorat Ajooni Saibang Gurprasaad*. Then there is a full stop and then there is a word, "Japu". Then there is another full stop. The *Mool Mantra* technically speaking stops there. But the Sikh *Mool Mantra* is fundamentally different from the traditional *mool mantras* prevalent in India. Traditional *mool mantras* in India have only one conceptual objective. That objective is to define and communicate their total view about the Ultimate Reality. But the Sikh *Mool Mantra* has two components. One is their total view of the Absolute and Ultimate Reality. And the other component of the Sikh *Mool Mantra* is in what relationship man stands to It. And how man achieves propinquity and nearness to It. This thing is wholly new and unique to the Sikh *Mool Mantra*. It is not present in any other *Mool Mantra* of the holy traditions of India.

Gurprasaad means that through the light which God gives, either through the human heart or through other means to his chosen prophets, through that light the man may achieve propinquity to this Ultimate Reality. In the opening lines of the "Japu" the essence of the *Mool Mantra* is again repeated by Guru Nanak. When you say, *Aad Sach, Jugaad Sach, Hai Bhee Sach*, Nanak Hosee Bhee Sach, you are repeating the words of Guru Nanak and from the revelations of the Gurus and from the text of the *Guru Granth Sahib* itself. By saying, "*Aad Sach, Jugaad Sach ...*" no Sikh commits any heresy, no sin, and he is not answerable nor meriting punishment for what is supposed to be a transgression of the *Mool Mantra*. The *Mool Mantra* is not to be read only once, but if you can repeat it in another language, in other words, and those other words are also part of the Sikh revelation, I do not see why any trouble should be created about

it. What the *Mool Mantra* is, from where it begins, where it ends, are academic questions. They would be valid in a thesis if it is to be submitted by one of you before some university for obtaining of Ph.D. degree. But for living a Sikh life you commit no transgression by saying "*Aad Sach, Jugaad Sach, Hai Bhee Sach, Nanak Hosee Bhee Sach*". And I do not know why this fuss has been raised by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, on a point which is neither here nor there.

The third point, the SGPC makes is that Siri Singh Sahib should call himself "Jathedar" and others should call themselves "Meet Jathedars". It does not seem to have been realized by the Executive Committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee or my friend the Jathedar of the Akal Takhat, that the words "Jathedar" and "Meet Jathedar" are terms which were coined by the Sikhs when they regimented themselves for martial purposes.

The word "Jathedar" appears in Sikh history for the first time round about 1730. As you are aware, most of you, after Guru Gobind Singh the Sikhs created a sovereign state and after five or six years that state fell and then the Sikhs had to pass through the valley of death. And a stage came when the government reports showed that Sikhs did not exist, they had become extinct. There was no Sikh to be seen. Then the Sikhs who were sent back to their homes after the collapse of the Sikh Republic which was founded round about "Sirhind", were engaged in peaceful activities of agriculture. For about twenty years they were subjected to great persecutions, the parallel of which is not to be found in the history of any religion, not even the Christian religion. During that period, round about 1723 or 1724, when Bhai Mani Singh, the first Granthi of the Siri Harimander Sahib, was arrested and hacked to pieces, it was at that time that wherever the Sikhs happened to be they were persecuted by the state. It is recorded in Giani Gian Singh's *Panth Parkash* that from fifty to sixty-six Sikhs collected at Amritsar on the occasion of Baishakhi, and at night time after reciting "Rahiraas", they held a meeting. One Sikh stood and said, "We had, under the directions of the Guru, established the sovereign republic. Our next step was to establish our political hegemony in the whole world of India, and then to go forward. But we have failed, and now, knowing that we have no power left, we have retired back to

our original homes, and engaged ourselves as humble agriculturists. But even as labourers and humble agriculturists, we are not allowed to live in peace. Look, what has happened. We have been harassed, we have been persecuted, each one of us, and now has come the turn of the saint martyr, the unique intellectual amongst the Sikhs. A most learned man, Bhai Mani Singh, has been cruelly hacked to pieces. Now we must do something." And they asked, "What can we do? We are so few, and the state power is so strong and so well-entrenched, we are simply helpless."

And then a man whose name we do not know but whose words are recorded said, "Khalsaji, as far as I can see, there is no way out for us except for us to turn our faces once again toward the Guru." He was asked to explain himself. He said, "The Guru has conferred upon us the sovereignty of the earth. And we have become humble slaves and citizens. Let us rise and take what belongs to us, the sovereignty. Let us lay our claim to sovereignty, to full sovereignty, and to total sovereignty. Either the throne or the scaffold should be our objective. Liberty or death. No third alternative." And there was a shout, an instinctive shout of "Sat Siri Akal". But then someone said, "What and how?" They agreed, "That is for the Guru. Let us make a start. We are sixty. All right, let us spread out into five groups and let each have one Jathedar, and let these five go back to their villages. Then after one year they should come back here on this very occasion of Baisakhi, and bring with them more men enlisted in their *jathas*, (that was a word used then), more men and arms from wherever you can procure them. Then we can contemplate the next step."

Though the Sikhs underwent a great many sacrifices, and their sufferings lasted thirty to forty years, in the end they emerged as a sovereign people.

This is the first time the word "Jathedar" was used. And when the Sikhs waged a confrontation and movement against the Britishers for the recapture and recontrol of the Gurdwaras, then they again formed themselves under the leadership of individuals they called Jathedars.

It is not for the first time that Sikh Dharma has been taught and spread in an organised manner as Siri Singh Sahibji has done. Under Guru Hargobind, under Udaasees, under four pontificates, and after that

through ordained ministries, authorized preachers have carried on the Dharma. None of these ministers was called Jathedar. Some were called Bhai Sahib, some were called Siri Mahant, some were called this, some were called that, some were called Babaji, Maharaj ji, whatever they thought proper to designate them. Without a designation, without a name, no organization can exist. This point does not seem to have been appreciated by those who addressed this letter to you, and if I am not mistaken, they are, perhaps, not even aware of the background of the term "Jathedar" and other designations to which I have made reference. The term "Jathedar" cannot be forced upon an organization of individuals who want to carry out the tasks of Sikh Dharma.

And then it is said that permission cannot be granted to alter the form and shape of the Sikh pennant. *Nishaan Sahib* merely means "insignia," flag. There is a Sikh flag that was never accepted as the political flag of the Sikh power. This Sikh flag has been accepted as the insignia and the flag of certain religious organizations amongst the Sikhs and it flies over the Gurdwaras. It is called the Sikh Nishaan Sahib. Now wherever a Sikh Gurdwara is, this Nishaan Sahib flies. It has a triangular shape, its color is "kesari", yellow, and on that there are the two outward-looking swords, and inside a circle, then a double-edged sword. You are all very well conversant with this. This is called the Nishaan Sahib of the Sikhs.

In history, as well as now, it is little used in the Sikh Gurdwaras and congregations or wherever else the Sikhs collect to march for a specific purpose. When Sikhs have made political conquests, that is before Ranjit Singh and after, this Sikh Nishaan Sahib was not exclusively or invariably used. It is on record: one can speak with certitude about the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, about half a century. When the Khalsa army was regularly organized, each one of its regiments had a distinctive flag of its own. There was an elite regiment of the Khalsa called Akal regiment. It was trained and it was raised by General Ventura, an Italian who fought with Napoleon at Waterloo, a very able man. The flag of this elite Akal regiment was triangular, dark blue color and on that was imposed a golden eagle. There was another regiment, a very powerful and victorious regiment which performed miraculous deeds in many battles and won many victories for the Khalsa army. Their flag was of dust color and on that was

the imprint of the monkey god, Hanuman. Previously there was only one flag which used to fly before the Akal Takhat in the Sikh hegemony and another flag far away which used to fly near the Golden Temple. That flag which was near the Akal Takhat had a round disk, no sword, but rather that thrust weapon which is taken in both hands, called "jandar." And the flag which flew near the Golden Temple, was of a yellow color on which was imprinted the insignia, the Sikh insignia of two outward curved swords.

After the death of Ranjit Singh, anarchy spread in the Sikh darbar, the Sikh government, for all kinds of reasons. One night a strong storm came, and in that storm that flag before the Akal Takhat fell down and was broken. Its mast was made of wood; it broke and the Khalsa Sikhs went to one of the Sikh saints, Bhai Vir Singh, and they asked, "Sire, Bhai Sahib, what is the meaning of all this?" He said, "It is a warning of the Guru to you, to the Khalsa, that unless you mend your ways and turn your face once again towards the Guru, towards whom you have turned your back, your glory and your worldly power is about to vanish." "Sir, how is it to be done?" "It is for you to decide." Then the Sikh darbar decided to raise two flags there. Now when you go to Akal Takhat you see two flags are flying there. On both of them is a "jandar" and they are of yellow, "ke-sari" color. Previously, during the time of the great General Phula Singh, who was the true Jathedar of Akal Takhat, this flag was a dark blue color.

I have given you all these details so that it will be very clear to you that I will also, when I go back to India, try to make it clear to them (SGPC) that there is not any sanction behind the idea that only one flag which is now flying over the Sikh Gurdwaras in the Punjab is permissible and no other flag is permissible. Organizational flags, regimental flags and insignias, have always existed in the Sikh tradition; if there is only one flag for everyone, nobody will know who's who. This point has not been appreciated and realized and the SGPC seems to think perhaps wrongly, perhaps after hearing so from somebody, that the Khalsa of USA and Siri Singh Sahib Ji are trying to found a new religion or a new sect, and therefore they now have a flag of their own also. This is ignorance, and blank ignorance, which I assure you I will try to remove when I go back.

And now that I have finished with all the points which have been

mentioned in this letter I want to conclude by saying that as far as this letter is concerned, you do not have to spend any sleepless nights. There is no point in this letter which may disturb you and I do not think there is any point in this letter to which even the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, those gentlemen who control the management of the property of the Gurdwaras, even those people will not any longer stick to these points when the whole situation is properly explained to them. And I think this matter should be allowed to rest here, but it is for the Khalsa Council to decide what further action is to be taken. My own advice would be to leave the matter here, and let us, your humble servants, go and explain to them what the true situation is, I conclude by saying, amongst the generality of Sikhs there is love, affection and a positive attitude towards you, attraction and a sense of pride which is slowly rising about their brothers in the Western Hemisphere of the world. And I hereby, on my behalf, say that it will be the greatest privilege of my life to render the Khalsa of the Western Hemisphere, the Khalsa of the United States of America and Canada any humble service of which I am capable. If ever you ask me to render any service to you I will consider it the greatest privilege which the Guru has granted me in this life, and I assure you that to the best of my ability I will try to do your bidding.

Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa

Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh!

Question: Sardarni Sahiba Ram Das Kaur Khalsa: I'm unclear about how the SGPC got the power to appoint the Jathedar of Akal Takhat. Does it have that power? And what is the role of the four Takhts, the Holy Thrones in the running or the ruling of the Dharma? I'm unclear as to how these Jathedars get appointed and what the authority of these Holy Thrones is in relationship to Sikhs all over the world.

Answer: Bhai Sahib Kapur Singh: I will answer this question about the appointment of Jathedars. It is a very basic question and it is not easy to give a short answer to the doctrine that it involves, but I will try my best.

By tradition Sikhs have four Takhts. Takhat is the throne of sovereignty. Takhat is a Persian word that means the throne of sovereignty. The original word, before the Muslims came to India, for the

throne of sovereignty was Singhaasan, seat of the lion. And that word was replaced by the word Takhat. In India there are certain religions that are not universally valid which were meant either for a region or for a certain caste of people, class of people. They were left aside. But the long-standing tradition is that whenever a cult, school of philosophy or a *sam-pradaaye* took birth and claimed that their teachings and the position that they have taken are universally valid, then four centers were appointed, four centers of authority or four centers of reference. Sikhs call them Takhats and many other religions and sects call them by various names, but they are always four. Sometimes it is "dhām" some times it is "tirath" sometimes it is "puri". Sikhs have four Takhats. The number four represents the four cardinal points of space. If you say, this thing is valid in all the four directions, it means it is valid universally. That is the significance to the term "Four Takhats".

We do not know when the thing started. The first Takhat was established, specifically by this name, by Guru Hargobind, in the 17th century, somewhere near 1606 or '07. The first Takhat which was established by the direct authority of Guru Hargobind, Nanak the Sixth, is Akal Takhat. It also has a mystical history behind it. When the holy tank of the Golden Temple was being dug up by voluntary service, people came, dug up earth and put it in baskets, and they took it on their heads and emptied the baskets somewhere outside. People came for service of love from various parts of India, wherever Sikhism happened to be. And it was the Guru's injunction that the tank should be dug slowly so that all the Sikhs from all the directions could participate. This went on for months and months together. To supervise these operations Guru Arjan used to sit on a place near the Dukhbbhanjani Beri. On that side of the Holy Tank there is a marble platform on which there is a canopy. That place is to mark the spot where Guru Arjan used to sit and supervise. One day, the story goes, after the *langar*, the morning meal, the digging operations were going on and various Sikhs, men, women, children, were digging the earth and singing the hymns. All of a sudden something happened; everybody was quiet as if some extraterrestrial influence has descended upon the people. Something happened to everybody and they stood spellbound. And then they saw that where Guru Arjan used to sit, (it is called Har Ki Pauri), four figures of light were standing. You read in

Japji Sahib "*tithey loay loay akaar*". It is in reference to such gods. "Loay" means lights. There the forms are of pure light.

Very well, they saw, there were four forms of light and they were recognizable as the Trinity of the Hindhu godhead, Brahmaa, the creator of the universe, Vishnoo, the sustainer of the universe and Shivjee who destroys the universe. This is the triple godhead. And there was a fourth figure which could not be recognized and which was somewhat diffused. It was overshadowing all. It is not only Guru Arjan who saw. Hundreds of people saw it, men, women and children and there are records. They saw it with their own eyes. And they saw that all these three people, three gods, they started digging the earth and Vishnoo, the supreme God. Two gods would dig the earth and they would put the earth in a basket and then they put the basket on the head of Vishnoo and then Vishnoo would take the basket and empty it on the place where now Akal Takhat exists. This thing went on for about half an hour and all of a sudden the bewitchment was gone. Everybody said, "What happened? Where am I? What did we see?" It was that kind of thing, you wake up, not from a dream but from some kind of trance. Then Guru Arjan gave some hint to the musicians who always used to be in attendance to play such and such *raga* and such-and-such mode of the music, and Guru Arjan sang. He had a very musical throat and could sing very well. The revelation which he sang was "God Himself has come from the unseen world to help his servants and saints. And I see it is a splendid neighborhood and the tank which rises out of it is bewitching and enchanting and it is filled with pure water" and the shabad goes on and then it also says, that "around it a town has sprung up and the town is very densely populated." He had a precognition of what was to come. But he indicated that God Himself came down to render willing cooperation to the establishment of this Holy Tank and the Golden Temple.

Perhaps most of you know the story when Guru Arjan came into direct conflict with the established power, the state power. The point of conflict was that the new emperor who had ascended the throne, Jahanghir was his name, had proclaimed that henceforth the constitution of the Indian society shall be on the Islamic level.

The original conflict of the Sikh religion with the state power started at that time with Guru Arjan, Nanak the Fifth. Before that there was no conflict. It came when the state power announced that henceforth Indian society shall be molded and governed and ruled according to *Shriyat*, the law of Mohammad. And according to that law it is a unitarian society, it is a totalitarian society, in which the only sovereign community is the Muslims. All non-Muslims are second class citizens, and they suffer all kinds of inequities. I will not go into details but it was against this decision of the emperor to impose the Mohammadan law and a totalitarian society and to outlaw an open society, and to banish the freedom of religion and the freedom of conscience, that Guru Arjan protested. And for this stance he was cruelly tortured and he's our first martyr Guru.

Before going to Lahore where he was summoned under a warrant, he sent for his son, Guru Hargobind, Nanak the Sixth, who was a young boy of eleven years then, and he also sent for Bhai Gurudass, a Saint Paul of Sikhism as he is called by some people, a very able and a very learned man and a very devoted, loyal Sikh. He said to Bhai Gurudass, "I have now to go to the royal court of the Turks, the foreigners. I have neither any organization, nor any power to make a refusal. I cannot refuse to go. He is bound to talk improperly and to make demands which are unacceptable and the result is that I am going to lay down my life for the protection of Dharma. It has to happen. Such is the will of God. Therefore do not sorrow over it and grieve not and listen to me carefully before I go. Look after his (young Guru Hargobind) education properly and when he is appointed as the sixth Guru, do not give him a rosary to wear as the previous Gurus used to do, to chant the name of "God and Nam Simran." Previously, whenever a Guru was enthroned in the formal ceremony both a rosary and a sword was presented. The sword was the sword of spirituality. The sword itself stands in Oriental literature for the Truth and central doctrine. "Do not present him with a rosary and a sword but present him with two swords, one of temporal dominion, the other of spiritual dominion." So when Guru Hargobind was enthroned as the sixth Guru, the ceremony was performed, and he put on two swords, one on the right and one on the left. One indicating sovereignty of the unseen world, the other indicating the sovereignty of the seen world, the temporal sovereignty. Guru Hargobind had this ceremony performed on the mound of

earth to which I have referred, which was seen to have been raised by the three gods who descended to the earth in the visible form.

It's that spot at which place a proper platform was built of burned bricks. But Guru Hargobind took special care. He said, "I will lay every brick with my own hands, but Bhai Gurudass may hand the bricks to me. Nobody else shall touch it." He made the first platform with his own hands and on that he sat and put on the two swords and declared himself *Miri Piri da Paatshaah*, the king of this world and the next world. It became a Takhat. This is how the concept of the Takhat came into the Sikh history. I am referring to the Sikh historical moment so that you may understand what a Takhat is.

About the other three Takhats, there are no definite records when, and at what time, and who. But, one thing is certain, that as far back as one year after the passing away of Guru Gobind Singh, it was accepted by universal consensus by the Sikhs everywhere, (Sikhs by that time had multiplied into hundreds and thousands), that there are four Takhats. There is the first Takhat, Amritsar, Akal Takhat it is called. Guru Hargobind, Nanak the Sixth, himself gave this Takhat its name. It is supposed to have operative sovereignty. Otherwise all the four Takhats have co-dominion. It is a co-sovereignty over the whole of the world and over the whole of the mystic body of the Khalsa. But then there is the division of labour. Akal Takhat has original dominion over the Northwest world. The other is Keshghar Sahib. It has the dominion over the Himalayan world and worlds beyond the seas, beyond the mountains, Tibet, China and whatever up to Russia if one day it is possible. Then there is the third Takhat which is situated in Patna Sahib, where Guru Gobind Singh was born. It has special original dominion over the eastern world. It goes up to Assam and Burma, the known world. And then the last Takhat is, in the south, Nander Sahib, Hazur Sahib where Guru Gobind Singh spent his last moments of life. It has dominion over the southern regions including the southern seas. These are the Takhats.

These Takhats from time to time have been presided over by Jathedars. Nobody ever appoints them. Nobody ever used to appoint them, rather it was some holy man, some man who was universally recognized, by the collective *sangat* of Sikhs where everybody said, "Yes, Yes, Yes."

He was a man who truly lived a dedicated and committed life as a Sikh and who was prepared not only to lay down his life but to make every sacrifice possible for the cause. That man would be *accepted*, not appointed, *accepted* as a *jathedar* of a Takhat. And in olden times, he always used to have a body of militia to enforce his decisions. That was the case even during the time when Maharaja Ranjit Singh was sitting as a sovereign at Lahore. The Jathedar of Akal Takhat was Akali Phoola Singh. He was appointed by nobody, he was accepted by everybody and he stood guardian over the Takhat. He always had 2500 men, a suicide squad you might call them, Akaalees, who used to be at his command, day and night.

There always have been people appointed by the general consensus of the local *sangats* as we might call them, congregations, and the only qualifications which they possessed was that they were universally respected as true and committed Sikhs. Whenever that confidence was shaken, that man went. He was thrown out. Not until the Britishers came and annexed the Punjab, did they start appointing a government nominated Jathedar. Then Akal Takhat became merely a slave place for about one hundred years. As long as the Britishers remained there, the Akal Takhat was just another institution under the control of the local British officer at Amritsar. After that, when this so-called Gurdwara movement started for the direct control of the Gurdwaras by the collectivity of the Sikhs, through the mechanism of Anglo-Saxon method of democratic vote, at that time when the lists of the Gurdwaras were prepared this act was to apply to Punjab only. And in Punjab at that time, only two Takhats existed: one, the Keshghar Sahib, the other Akal Takhat Sahib. They were included in that list of the holy Gurdwaras which are to be managed by the Committee (SGPC). Sikhs said, "How are we going to have these Takhats under our control? These Takhats are the focal point of Sikh sovereignty. What shall we do with the Jathedar? Who shall appoint the Jathedar? What will be the relationship of the Jathedar with the SGPC, which is only a statutory body?" And proposals were made that these Takhats should be left out of the purview of the new act which was going to be enacted, that the Takhats should not be under the control of the management of the SGPC. But Master Tara Singh in particular and some others, they said, "No. We must control Akal Takhat and Keshghar

Sahib so we won't be influenced by the British, so we can condemn and damn the British from these two Takhts." That was the argument given. Whatever the real intention was I do not know. From that time onwards, from 1925 onwards the Jathedars, so-called, I should say, because a real Jathedar is not an appointee, a Jathedar of Akal Takhat and a Jathedar of Keshghar Sahib Takhat, were appointed as employees of the SGPC. They drew salaries and they carried out whatever instruction the SGPC gave them. That condition continues.

Question : Sardarni Sahiba Ram Das Kaur Khalsa : If we're supposed to bow to the Akal Takhat, what are we bowing to? I understand the Akal Takhat is the supreme religious authority and I want to bow to it as a daughter of Guru Gobind Singh but what is it I am bowing to if it's a Jathedar who is under the auspices of the SGPC? How are we obedient to the Akal Takhat without catering to an individual?

Answer : Bhai Sahib Kapur Singh : My answer to this is, you bow before the Akal Takhat as a concept and as a holy place. And if the Jathedar of the Akal Takhat says something which is in accordance with the traditions and tenets and doctrines of Sikhism, accept it. If he says something which your conscience and the informed consciousness of the community tells you is against the Dharma, it is undignified, it does not go well with the Sikh traditions, say, "I don't obey." I myself have done this twice.

Courtesy : Beads of Truth, 3 HO Foundation—From Bead No. 3, Volume II, Fall, September 1979

Note: Words 'colar', 'Mold', 'center' retain their American spellings in the article.

APPENDIX I

[Para 11 which should have appeared on page 87 of the book, is reproduced below. The article in *The Sikh Review* of October 1979 did not contain this para. The discrepancy was discovered on coming across the version of the same article repeated in *The Sikh Review* of May 1980. The same is reproduced here in pursuance of foot note+ appearing on page 87 of this book.

Also is reproduced below a letter written by Prof. Harbans Singh, editor Encyclopaedia of Sikhism appreciating the author's deep insight into the subject touched in the article under reference--editors.]

11. In Islam, Muhyi-ud-Din Ibn 'Arabi (1165--1240), the great Spaniard mystic, exegetises over the trilogical *hadith* of Mohammad, wherein the Prophet declares that "three things of the world have been made worthy of love for me" wherein he found 'freshness of his eyes,' that is, consolation. These "three things" *thalathun*, are 'women,' 'scent' and 'prayer,' *'aurat*, *'itar*, *'abadat*. Ibn 'Arabi explains that "when man loves woman he desires union, that is to say, the most complete union that can be possible in love; and in the form composed of elements, there exists no union more intense than conjugal act."¹ He explains further that "man's contemplation of God in woman is the most perfect" and not so "purely interior contemplation." "One would never be able to contemplate God directly, in absence of all support, for God, in his Absolute Essence, is independent of worlds."² Man is "placed as an intermediary between the Essence, *dhat* (God) from which he emanates and woman who emanates from him,"³ and he who loves woman "only for voluptuousness remains unconscious of that which is really in question",⁴ the contemplation, *mushahadah*, of God in woman, of the *nounenous* essence in the orgasmic experience of the conjugal sex. This is the apex of anabasis of sexual mysticism of Islam in which is grounded its fundamental social struture, *ash-shara*, that strictly forbids celibacy, monasticism and sex-maceration,

1. Angela Culme-Seymour, *Fusus al Hikam* (English rendition), Beshara Publication, U.K. 1975, p. 119.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

but the real afflorescence of Islamic mysticism, the phenomenon of 'Sufism', has achieved its true dimensions independent of and outside this frame-work of sexual mysticism of the triad of the Prophet Mohammed consisting of 'woman, scents and prayer'.

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**Copy of Professor Harbans Singh's Letter of appreciation
of Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh's article entitled
"Sex and Sikhism", addressed to the author.**

"Dear Sardar Sahib,

Dr. Attar Singh did send me your essay--and took the precaution of having the packet registered. It was good serious reading, and I went through it twice over. In a contemporary reference frame and in contemporary intellectual idiom, it is a masterly exposition of the Sikh teaching and Sikh way of life. Characteristically, insights from many diverse fields such as philosophy, religion, literature, art, psychology and sociology have been brought to working out the thesis. The writing is, as always superb--so cogent, so immaculate. There is not one word in the entire essay which will bear substitution--such is the precision and harmony of phrase. The chapter will aptly round off your book which we shall be looking forward to seeing in print. Meanwhile, my congratulation--and my compliments.

With my best regards.

Yours sincerely,

Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan
Punjabi University, Patiala

Sd/- Harbans Singh
Professor of Sikh Studies, and
Editor, the Encyclopaedia of
Sikhism

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INDEX

- Abadali, Ahmed Shah, 12, 29.
 Abraham, 80.
 Adam, 80.
 Adi Granth, 5f.n., 8f.n., 9f.n. 57f.n., 62f.n.,
 68f.n., 69f.n., 70f.n., 71f.n., 72f.n.,
 74f.n., 75f.n., 76f.n., 78f.n., 83f.n.,
 86f.n., 94, 96, 100, 101, 102, 104, 105.
 Afghanistan, 5, 13, 107.
 Africa, 2.
 Aga Khan, 54.
Ahimsa, 41.
 Ahmadiya, 33, 37.
 Ajmer, 93.
 Akalees, 127.
 Akali Dal, 19.
 Akali Phoola Singh, 127.
 Akal Regiment, 120.
 Akal Takht, 118, 121, 122, 123, 124, 126,
 127, 128.
 Akbar, the Great, 54.
 Akhand Kirtani, 87.
 Al-Bairuni, 28.
 Albaqr, 34.
 Alexander, 27.
 Al Farabi, 100.
 All Canada Sikh Federation, 1, 112.
 All India Congress, 18.
 All India Sikh Federation, 21.
 All Russia Communist Party, 52, 53, 54,
 60.
 All Union Communist Party, 53.
 Amar Dass, Guru, 92.
 Amar Singh, Dasanjh, 44.
 Ambedkar (Dr.), 24.
 America, 2, 3, 51, 59, 84, 112, 116, 122.
 American Declaration of Independence, 28.
 Amritsar, 26, 44, 50, 77, 92, 102, 118, 126,
 127.
 Anandavardhan, 103.
Anand Karaj, 76.
 Andaman, 14, 15, 59.
 Anglo Saxon, 127.
 Anglo-Sikh Wars, 29, 108.
 Arabia, 5, 108.
 Arabian Sea, 1.
 Ardebil, 54.
 Argentina, 84.
 Arjun, Guru, 27, 41, 92, 123, 124, 125.
 Arrian, 27.
Arthashastra, 42.
 Arya Samaj, 25, 26.
 Asia, 5, 7, 10, 42, 46, 83, 107.
 Assam, 126.
 Aurangzeb, 42.
 Australia, 30.
 Attar Singh, Dr. 127, 130.
 Avtar Singh, Sri, 91.
 Baba Dayal (of Rawalpindi), 91.
Babarbarani, 7, 8.
 Babur, (Emperor), 7.
 Badhera, Ganesh Das, 32.
 Bahadur, Banda Singh, 11, 28.
 Bahadur Shah, 10, 11.
 Baisakhi, 118, 119.
 Baluchistan, 29.
 Bastile, 110.
Beads of Truth, 128.
 Beas, 91.
 Behara Publication, 129f.n.
 Bein, 4, 5.
 Bengal, 23.

- Bentinck, William, 59.
 Beyazid, 54.
Bhagavad Gita, 42, 94, 95.
 Bharat, 1.
 Bharatri Hari, 69.
Bhavishyapurana, 80.
 Bhutan, 37.
Bible, 78, 79.
 Bradley, F.H., 66.
 Brahma (Hindu Godhead), 124.
 Brahmo-Samaj, 106.
 Brazil, 84.
 British India, 112.
 British Parliament, 17, 19.
 Broad, C.D. Dr., 97.
 Buddha, (Gautam), 94.
 Burma, 126.
 Calcutta, 50.
 California, 114, 115.
 Cambridge, 63, 81, 97.
 Canada, 1, 2, 21, 51, 81, 82, 83, 84, 86, 112, 122.
 Cape Comorin, 1.
 Caspian (Sea), 54.
 Catholic, 83, 84.
 Central Singh Sabha Committee of North America, 114.
 Ceylon, 5, 37.
 Chandika, 47.
 Charvaka, 32.
 Chenghiz Khan, 12.
Chhandogya, 64 f.n., 66, 94.
 China, 6, 13, 29, 126.
 Christ, Jesus, 110.
 Civil and Military Gazette, 111.
 Communal Award, 24.
 Communist Manifesto, 28.
 Communist Party, 56, 57, 58, 62.
 Constituent Assembly, 18, 19, 20.
 Constitution of India, 18, 19.
 Dalai Lama, 13, 29.
Dasam Granth (DG), 56 f.n., 76 f.n.
 Dayal Singh Majithia, Sardar, 107, 108, 110.
 Deccan, 10.
 Delhi, 11, 13, 20, 26, 28, 55, 97.
Dhadis, 44.
 Dharam Parchar Committee, 44, 45.
 Diodorus, 27.
 Dogra, Gulab Singh, 29.
 Dosanjh, Amar Singh, 44.
 Dowson (Elliot-and), 28.
Dukhbhanjani Beri, 123.
 Dusseldorf, 77.
 Eddington, 98.
 Elliot, 28.
 Eminabad, 49.
Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, 129, 130.
 Engels, 28.
 England, 97, 107, 112.
 Europe, 2, 12, 28, 45, 110.
 Five 'K's, 81.
 Forester, George, 29.
 France, 112.
 Fredrick II, 45.
 French Revolution, 11, 28, 110.
 Freud Sigmund, 65, 66, 67.
 Gandhi, Mahatma, 18, 22, 23, 24, 32, 41.
 Gangetic Plain, 107.
 Garo, 29.
 Gautam Buddha, 93, 96.
 Germany, 77.
 Ghadarites, 15.
 Ghadar Party, 59.
 Ghalib, 73 f.n.
 Ghorri, Mohammad, 28.
 Ghosh, Aurobindo, 24, 25, 66.
 Gian Singh, Giani, 118.
 Gilgit, 29.
 Gobind Singh/Govind Singh Guru, 8, 9, 10, 18, 22, 23, 28, 31, 41, 43, 55, 60, 81, 83, 85, 91, 98, 101, 118, 126.
 Golden Temple, 50, 102, 121, 123, 124.
 Gometeshvar, 65.

- Gracco-Bactrian, 107.
 Great Britain, 81.
 Greek, 27, 69.
 Gupta, Hari Ram, 30.
 Guraduhpauranam, 36.
 Gurdas, Bhai, 6, 9f.n., 76f.n., 101, 125, 126.
 Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 99.
 Gurney, Edmund, 102, 104.
 Guru Gobind Singh Bhawan, 115, 130.
 Guru Granth, 25, 27, 34, 35, 56, 70, 72, 74, 81, 91, 94, 95, 96, 100, 101, 104, 115, 117.
 Guru Nanak Dev University, 51, 63.
Hadith, 100, 129.
 Haji of Mosul, 33, 36.
 Halaqu, 12.
 Hanuman (Monkey God), 121.
 Harbhajan Singh (Jogi), 111.
 Harbans Singh, Prof., 44, 129, 130.
 Hargovind/Hargobind, Guru, 23, 25, 26, 41, 119, 123, 125, 126.
 Harimander Sahib, Siri, (Golden Temple), 118.
Hari Ki Pauri, 123.
 Hasan, Uzen, 54.
 Hazur Sahib, 126.
 Heiun Tsang, 27.
 Himalayan World, 126.
 Himalayas, 1, 5, 6, 13.
 Hinayan, 37, 39.
 Hindustan, 58.
 Hitler, 11.
 Ho Chih Minh, 61.
 Hussan Abdal, 7.
 Imperial Daily Diaries, 11.
 India, 1, 2, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 37, 42, 48, 50, 52, 55, 59, 60, 63, 66, 84, 89, 93, 110, 112, 113, 116, 117, 118, 121, 123.
 India Library, London, 29.
 Indian Congress, 18.
 Indian Parliament House, 19.
 Indian Sea, 1.
 Indus, 1.
 Indus Valley, 107.
 Iran, 107.
 Iraq, 33.
 Isfahan, 54, 55.
 Ishtadeva, 23.
 Iskardu, 29.
 Ismail, 54.
 Ismaili, 37.
 Jacobin Club, 110.
Jala-Stambha-Samadhi, 64.
 James Joyce, 28.
 Jamrud, 107.
 Jamuna, 10, 13, 107.
Janamsakhis, 4, 5.
Jangnameh, 29.
Japu, 56, 94.
 Jehangir, 41.
 Jesus, Christ, 95.
 Joyce, James, 22.
 Jullundur, 44.
 Junaid, 54.
 Jung, Karl, 67.
 Kabir, 71 f.n., 74f.n., 75f.n.
 Kabul, 30.
 Kailash, 6, 8.
 Kanya Kumari, 1.
 Kapur Singh, Sirdar, 1, 33, 51, 63, 77, 115, 122, 128, 130.
 Kartarpur, 26.
 Kashmir, 26, 107.
 Kerensky, 53.
Keshas, 84.
 Keshgarh Sahib, 126, 127, 128.
 Khajuraho, 63, 74.
 Khalistan, 113.
 Khalsa, 8, 10, 18, 20, 28, 31, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 94, 98, 108, 110, 115, 116, 121, 122, 126.
 Khalsa Army, 120.

- Khalsa College, Amritsar, 26.
 Khalsa Council, 122.
 Khalsa Council of the Sikh Dharma, 115.
 Khalsa of the United States, 122.
 Khalsa of U.S.A., 121.
 Khawaja Muinuddin Chisti, 93.
Kirtan, 87, 100.
 Konark, 74.
 Korea, 37.
 Krishna, 23.
 Kshatriya, 32, 42, 43.
 Kuka Movement, 108.
 Ladakh, 29.
 Lahore, 13, 29, 30, 32, 33, 58, 107, 108, 110, 127.
 Lahore Durbar, 108.
 Lakhpat Rai, Diwan, 95.
 Lalo, Bhai, 49.
 Langhan, 42.
 Later Mughals, 30.
 Lawrence, D.H., 63, 66.
 Lawrence, General, 108.
 Lenin, 2, 52, 53, 56, 60, 61, 62.
 London, 29.
 Los Angeles, 115.
 Ludhiana, 10.
 Madras, 15.
 Magnum Opus, History, 2.
 Mahadeva, 65.
 Mahayan, 37, 39, 83.
 Mahmud of Ghazni, 38.
 Majha, 85.
 Malaviya, Madan Mohan, Pandit, 24.
 Malaysia, 2, 51.
 Mani Singh, Bhai, 118, 119.
 Mansrovar, 6.
 Mantrayana, 39.
 Manu, 65.
Manusmriti 95.
 Marcuse, Herbert, 64, 66.
 Mardana, 4.
 Marseilles, 97.
 Marx, 28, 60, 61.
 Master Tara Singh, 127.
 Mecca, 7.
 Mexico, 84.
Mimamsa, 80.
Miri Piri da Padshah, (Guru Hargobind), 126.
 Moghul Empire, 10, 11, 12, 41.
 Mohammed, (Prophet), 36, 40, 100, 125, 129, 130.
 Mohammad Iqbal, Sir, 100, 104.
 Mongols, 110.
 Moore, Prof., 97.
 Moscow, 61.
 Mosul, 36.
 Muhyi-ud-Din Ibn Arabi, 129.
 Muktsar, 85.
 Multan, 30.
 Musa, 54.
 Muslim League, 17.
 Mysore, 65, 84.
 Nadir, 12, 55.
Namayoga, 76.
 Namdhari, 91.
 Nanak, Guru, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 26, 28, 33, 34, 35, 36, 43, 49, 56, 68, 78, 80, 81, 83, 94.
 Nander Sahib, 126.
 Nand Lal, Goya, 101.
 Napoleon, 120.
 National Book Trust, 30.
 Naunihal Singh, 29.
 Nehru, Jawaharlal Pandit, 18, 19.
 Nehru, Motilal, 18.
 Nepal, 6.
 Nepolean, 120.
 New York, 64f.n.
 New Zealand, 30.
 Nirankaris, 91.
 Nirmalas, 49.
 Nirukta, 80.
Nishan Sahib, 120.

- Nur Mohammed, Quazi, 29.
 Ottoman Padishah, 53, 54.
 Oxford, 41.
 Oxus, 107.
 Pakistan, 17, 112, 113.
 Pakpattan, 49.
 Palestine, 108.
 Panipat, 10.
 Panja Sahib, 7.
 Panth, 92.
 Papacy, 45.
 Paris, 61.
 Parmahansa, Ramkrishna, 24, 25.
 Pathan Empire, 12.
 Patiala, 130.
 Patna Sahib, 126.
 Peacock Throne, 55.
Pentateuch, 79.
 Persia, 55.
 Peshawar, 27.
 Petrine, Czarism, 53.
 Phoola Singh Akalee General, 121.
 Plutarch, 27.
 Pontius Pilate, 110.
 Prophet Mohammed, 130.
 Protestants, 83.
 Punjab, 4, 15, 26, 30, 33, 52, 63, 81, 84, 93, 106, 107, 108, 110, 121, 127.
 Punjabi University, Patiala, 130.
 Puri, Pushpinder Singh, 81.
Quran/Koran, 2, 7, 33, 34, 35, 36, 78, 79, 99, 100.
 Qyslbash, 53, 55.
 Rabindranath Tagore, 107.
 Radhasoamis, 91, 99.
Rahiras, 118.
 Rajha Ram Mohan Roy, 106.
 Ramdas, Guru, 25.
 Ram Das Kaur, Khalsa, Sardarni Sahiba, 122, 128.
 Ram Mohan Roy, Raja, 107.
 Rana Partap, 25, 26.
 Randhir Singh, Bhai, 15, 87, 88, 89, 92, 93, 94, 97, 98, 99, 102, 105.
 Ranjit Singh, Maharaja, 29, 58, 108, 120, 121, 127.
 Ratan Chand Raod, 111.
 Ravi, 10.
 Rawalpindi, 91.
 Reformation, 110.
Rigveda, 64.
 Rudyard Kipling, 111.
 Rupar, 59.
 Russian Revolution, 53.
 Russia, 126.
 Safawis, 53, 54, 55.
 Safi, 54.
 Sahir Ludhianavi, 73f.n.
 Saif-ud-Din Ishak, Sheikh, 54.
 Saint Paul, 125.
 Sajjan, Bhai, 49.
 San Jose, 114.
Samkhya, 94.
 Samrath, Ramdas, 26.
 Sarhkaracarya, 85.
 Sanskrit, 1, 35, 69.
 Santokh Singh, Bhai, 31.
Sarkar-i-Khalsa, 12, 13, 29, 107.
 Sawan Singh, Baba, 91.
 Seymour, Angela Culme, 129f.n.
 Shah Abas, 54.
 Shah Mohammad, 108.
 Sherlay, Anthony Sir, 54.
 Sher Singh, Maharaja, 110.
 Shiromani Akali Dal, 113.
 Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), 44, 45, 49, 50, 51, 77, 116, 118, 121, 122, 127, 128.
 Shiva Ji, Maratha, 22, 24, 25, 26.
 Shivjee (Hindu Godhead), 124.
Sikh Rahit Maryada, 116.
 Sikh Republic, 118.
 Simla, 52, 59.
 Singh Sabha Movement, 96.
 Singh Sahib Ji, Siri (Bhajan Jogi), 118.

INDEX

- 119, 121.
 Sirhind 28, 118.
 Siva, 65.
 St. Paul, 6.
 Sufi, 110, 93.
 Sultanpur, 4.
 Sri Chand, 26.
 Tagore, 22, 23, 32.
 Tantra/Tantra Cult, 66, 67.
 Tantrayana, 37, 39.
 Tara Singh, Master, 19, 127.
 Thanesar, 27.
 Thompson School Auditorium, 1.
 Tibet, 6, 13, 29, 37, 126.
 Tibetan Buddhism, 37, 39.
 Timur Shah, 30, 54.
 Tirathankar, 65.
 Toronto, 37.
 Totapuri, 25.
 Toynebee, Arnold, 2, 3, 23, 31, 41, 52, 55
 Tribune, 110.
 Tulamba, 49.
 Turkey, 5.
 Turkish Middle Asia, 107.
 Udasis/Udaasees, 6, 25, 49, 119.
 U.K. 129f.n.
 UNESCO, 83.
 U.P. (Uttar Pradesh), 84.
 U.S.A., 114, 116.
 Vaikunth, 36.
 Vajrayana, 37, 66, 67.
 Vancouver, 1, 2, 14, 21, 112.
Varanshram Dharma, 24.
 Varanasi, 26.
Vedas, 3, 26, 52, 63, 78, 79, 80.
 Ventura, General, 120.
 Vietnam, 37.
 Victoria, 63.
 Victor Muckjet-Jun (Dr.), 77.
 Vir Singh, Bhai, 121.
 Vishnoo/Vishnu (Hindu Godhead), 99,
 124.
Vishnu-Purana, 1, 38.
 Vishva Hindu Parishad, 33.
 Vivekananda, Swami, 25.
 Vrijanand, 26.
 Waterloo, 110, 120.
 Western Hemisphere, 122.
 Wittsgentein, 97.
 Wolff, (Dr.), 58, 59.
 World War, II, 14, 59, 96.
 Yeidel, 61.
 Yogis, 6, 69.
Young India, 23.
 Zen, 39.